ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY

Pocket Edition

JOHNSON



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON BOMBAY CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK BOSTON · CHICAGO
ATLANTA SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS

SAMUEL JOHNSON

LESLIE STEPHEN

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1909

First printed May 1878
Reprinted July 1878, 1879, 1880, 1882, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1891, 1895
1897, 1900, 1907, 1908
Library Edition 1902
Reprinted 1906
Pocket Edition 1909

CONTENTS.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

was Queen Anne, to whom, in compliance with a superstition just dying a natural death, he had been taken by his mother to be touched for the king's evil. The touch was ineffectual. Perhaps, as Boswell suggested, he ought to have been presented to the genuine heirs of the Stuarts in Rome. Disease and superstition had thus stood by his cradle, and they never quitted him during life. The demon of hypochondria was always lying in wait for him, and could be exorcised for a time only by hard work or social excitement. Of this we shall hear enough; but it may be as well to sum up at once some of the physical characteristics which marked him through life and greatly influenced his career.

The disease had scarred and disfigured features otherwise regular and always impressive. It had seriously injured his eyes, entirely destroying, it seems, the sight of one. He could not, it is said, distinguish a friend's face half a yard off, and pictures were to him meaningless patches, in which he could never see the resemblance to their objects. The statement is perhaps exaggerated; for he could see enough to condemn a portrait of himself. He expressed some annoyance when Reynolds had painted him with a pen held close to his eye; and protested that he would not be handed down to posterity as "blinking Sam." It seems that habits of minute attention atoned in some degree for this natural defect. Boswell tells us how Johnson once corrected him as to the precise shape of a mountain; and Mrs. Thrale says that he was a close and exacting critic of ladies' dress, even to the accidental position of a riband. He could even lay down æsthetical canons upon such matters. He reproved her for wearing a dark dress as unsuitable to a "little creature." "What," he asked, "have not all insects gay colours?" His insen-

sibility to music was even more pronounced than his dulness of sight. On hearing it said, in praise of a musical performance, that it was in any case difficult, his feeling comment was, "I wish it had been impossible!"

The queer convulsions by which he amazed all beholders were probably connected with his disease, though he and Reynolds ascribed them simply to habit. When entering a doorway with his blind companion, Miss Williams, he would suddenly desert her on the step in order to "whirl and twist about" in strange gesticulations. The performance partook of the nature of a superstitious ceremonial. He would stop in a street or the middle of a room to go through it correctly. Once he collected a laughing mob in Twickenham meadows by his antics; his hands imitating the motions of a jockey riding at full speed and his feet twisting in and out to make heels and toes touch alternately. He presently sat down and took out a *Grotius De Veritate*, over which he "seesawed" so violently that the mob ran back to see what was the matter. Once in such a fit he suddenly twisted off the shoe of a lady who sat by him. Sometimes he seemed to be obeying some hidden impulse, which commanded him to touch every post in a street or tread on the centre of every paving-stone, and would return if his task had not been accurately performed.

In spite of such oddities, he was not only possessed of physical power corresponding to his great height and massive stature, but was something of a proficient at athletic exercises. He was conversant with the theory, at least, of boxing; a knowledge probably acquired from an uncle who kept the ring at Smithfield for a year, and was never beaten in boxing or wrestling. His constitutional fearlessness would have made him a formidable antagonist.

Here lies good master duck
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on;
If it had lived, it had been good luck,
For then we had had an odd one.

The verses, however, were really made by his father, who passed them off as the child's, and illustrate nothing but the paternal vanity. In fact the boy was regarded as something of an infant prodigy. His great powers of memory, characteristic of a mind singularly retentive of all impressions, were early developed. He seemed to learn by intuition. Indolence, as in his after life, alternated with brief efforts of strenuous exertion. His want of sight prevented him from sharing in the ordinary childish sports; and one of his great pleasures was in reading old romances—a taste which he retained through life. Boys of this temperament are generally despised by their fellows; but Johnson seems to have had the power of enforcing the respect of his companions. Three of the lads used to come for him in the morning and carry him in triumph to school, seated upon the shoulders of one and supported on each side by his companions.

After learning to read at a dame-school, and from a certain Tom Brown, of whom it is only recorded that he published a spelling-book and dedicated it to the Universe, young Samuel was sent to the Lichfield Grammar School, and was afterwards, for a short time, apparently in the character of pupil-teacher, at the school of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire. A good deal of Latin was "whipped into him," and though he complained of the excessive severity of two of his teachers, he was always a believer in the virtues of the rod. A child, he said, who is flogged, "gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the

foundations of lasting mischief; you make brothers and sisters hate each other." In practice, indeed, this stern disciplinarian seems to have been specially indulgent to children. The memory of his own sorrows made him value their happiness, and he rejoiced greatly when he at last persuaded a schoolmaster to remit the old-fashioned holiday-task.

Johnson left school at sixteen and spent two years at home, probably in learning his father's business. This seems to have been the chief period of his studies. Long afterwards he said that he knew almost as much at eighteen as he did at the age of fifty-three—the date of the remark. His father's shop would give him many opportunities, and he devoured what came in his way with the undiscriminating eagerness of a young student. His intellectual resembled his physical appetite. He gorged books. He tore the hearts out of them, but did not study systematically. *Do you read books through?* he asked indignantly of some one who expected from him such supererogatory labour. His memory enabled him to accumulate great stores of a desultory and unsystematic knowledge. Somehow he became a fine Latin scholar, though never first-rate as a Grecian. The direction of his studies was partly determined by the discovery of a folio of Petrarch, lying on a shelf where he was looking for apples; and one of his earliest literary plans, never carried out, was an edition of Politian, with a history of Latin poetry from the time of Petrarch. When he went to the University at the end of this period, he was in possession of a very unusual amount of reading.

Meanwhile he was beginning to feel the pressure of poverty. His father's affairs were probably getting into disorder. One anecdote—it is one which it is difficult

to read without emotion—refers to this period. Many years afterwards, Johnson, worn by disease and the hard struggle of life, was staying at Lichfield, where a few old friends still survived, but in which every street must have revived the memories of the many who had long since gone over to the majority. He was missed one morning at breakfast, and did not return till supper-time. Then he told how his time had been passed. On that day fifty years before, his father, confined by illness, had begged him to take his place to sell books at a stall at Uttoxeter. Pride made him refuse. "To do away with the sin of this disobedience, I this day went in a post-chaise to Uttoxeter, and going into the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head and stood with it bare an hour before the stall which my father had formerly used, exposed to the sneers of the standers-by and the inclemency of the weather; a penance by which I trust I have propitiated Heaven for this only instance, I believe, of contumacy to my father." If the anecdote illustrates the touch of superstition in Johnson's mind, it reveals too that sacred depth of tenderness which ennobled his character. No repentance can ever wipe out the past or make it be as though it had not been; but the remorse of a fine character may be transmuted into a permanent source of nobler views of life and the world.

There are difficulties in determining the circumstances and duration of Johnson's stay at Oxford. He began residence at Pembroke College in 1728. It seems probable that he received some assistance from a gentleman whose son took him as companion, and from the clergy of Lichfield, to whom his father was known, and who were aware of the son's talents. Possibly his college assisted him during part of the time. It

is certain that he left without taking a degree, though he probably resided for nearly three years. It is certain, also, that his father's bankruptcy made his stay difficult, and that the period must have been one of trial.

The effect of the Oxford residence upon Johnson's mind was characteristic. The lad already suffered from the attacks of melancholy, which sometimes drove him to the borders of insanity. At Oxford, Law's *Serious Call* gave him the strong religious impressions which remained through life. But he does not seem to have been regarded as a gloomy or a religious youth by his contemporaries. When told in after years that he had been described as a "gay and frolicsome fellow," he replied, "Ah! sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority." Though a hearty supporter of authority in principle, Johnson was distinguished through life by the strongest spirit of personal independence and self-respect. He held, too, the sound doctrine, deplored by his respectable biographer Hawkins, that the scholar's life, like the Christian's, levelled all distinctions of rank. When an officious benefactor put a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation He seems to have treated his tutors with a contempt which Boswell politely attributed to "great fortitude of mind," but Johnson himself set down as "stark insensibility." The life of a poor student is not, one may fear, even yet exempt from much bitterness, and in those days the position was far more servile than at present. The servitors and sizars had much to bear from richer companions. A proud melancholy lad, conscious of great powers, had

loved Oxford as though she had not been a harsh stepmother to his youth. Sir, he said fondly of his college, "we are a nest of singing-birds." Most of the strains are now pretty well forgotten, and some of them must at all times have been such as we scarcely associate with the nightingale. Johnson, however, cherished his college friendships, delighted in paying visits to his old university, and was deeply touched by the academical honours by which Oxford long afterwards recognized an eminence scarcely fostered by its protection. Far from sharing the doctrines of Adam Smith, he only regretted that the universities were not richer, and expressed a desire which will be understood by advocates of the "endowment of research," that there were many places of a thousand a year at Oxford.

On leaving the University, in 1731, the world was all before him. His father died in the end of the year, and Johnson's whole immediate inheritance was twenty pounds. Where was he to turn for daily bread? Even in those days, most gates were barred with gold and opened but to golden keys. The greatest chance for a poor man was probably through the Church. The career of Warburton, who rose from a similar position to a bishopric might have been rivalled by Johnson, and his connexions with Lichfield might, one would suppose, have helped him to a start. It would be easy to speculate upon causes which might have hindered such a career. In later life, he more than once refused to take orders upon the promise of a living. Johnson, as we know him, was a man of the world; though a religious man of the world. He represents the secular rather than the ecclesiastical type. So far as his mode of teaching goes, he is rather a disciple of Socrates than of St. Paul or Wesley. According to

him, a "tavern-chair" was "the throne of human felicity," and supplied a better arena than the pulpit for the utterance of his message to mankind. And, though his external circumstances doubtless determined his method, there was much in his character which made it congenial. Johnson's religious emotions were such as to make habitual reserve almost a sanitary necessity. They were deeply coloured by his constitutional melancholy. Fears of death and hell were prominent in his personal creed. To trade upon his feelings like a charlatan would have been abhorrent to his masculine character; and to give them full and frequent utterance like a genuine teacher of mankind would have been to imperil his sanity. If he had gone through the excitement of a Methodist conversion, he would probably have ended his days in a madhouse.

Such considerations, however, were not, one may guess, distinctly present to Johnson himself; and the offer of a college fellowship or of private patronage might probably have altered his career. He might have become a learned recluse or a struggling Parson Adams. College fellowships were less open to talent then than now, and patrons were never too propitious to the uncouth giant, who had to force his way by sheer labour, and fight for his own hand. Accordingly, the young scholar tried to coin his brains into money by the most depressing and least hopeful of employments. By becoming an usher in a school, he could at least turn his talents to account with little delay, and that was the most pressing consideration. By one schoolmaster he was rejected on the ground that his infirmities would excite the ridicule of the boys. Under another he passed some months of "complicated misery," and could never think of the school without horror and aversion. Finding this situation intolerable, he settled in Birmingham, in 1733,

to be near an old schoolfellow, named Hector, who was apparently beginning to practise as a surgeon. Johnson seems to have had some acquaintances among the comfortable families in the neighbourhood; but his means of living are obscure. Some small literary work came in his way. He contributed essays to a local paper, and translated a book of Travels in Abyssinia. For this, his first publication, he received five guineas. In 1734 he made certain overtures to Cave, a London publisher, of the result of which I shall have to speak presently. For the present it is pretty clear that the great problem of self-support had been very inadequately solved.

Having no money and no prospects, Johnson naturally married. The attractions of the lady were not very manifest to others than her husband. She was the widow of a Birmingham mercer named Porter. Her age at the time (1735) of the second marriage was forty-six, the bridegroom being not quite twenty-six. The biographer's eye was not fixed upon Johnson till after his wife's death, and we have little in the way of authentic description of her person and character. Garrick, who had known her, said that she was very fat, with cheeks coloured both by paint and cordials, flimsy and fantastic in dress and affected in her manners. She is said to have treated her husband with some contempt, adopting the airs of an antiquated beauty, which he returned by elaborate deference. Garrick used his wonderful powers of mimicry to make fun of the uncouth caresses of the husband, and the courtly Beauclerc used to provoke the smiles of his audience by repeating Johnson's assertion that "it was a love-match on both sides." One incident of the wedding-day was ominous. As the newly-married couple rode back from church, Mrs. Johnson showed her

spirit by reproaching her husband for riding too fast, and then for lagging behind. Resolved "not to be made the slave of caprice," he pushed on briskly till he was fairly out of sight. When she rejoined him, as he, of course, took care that she should soon do, she was in tears. Mrs. Johnson apparently knew how to regain supremacy; but, at any rate, Johnson loved her devotedly during life, and clung to her memory during a widowhood of more than thirty years, as fondly as if they had been the most pattern hero and heroine of romantic fiction.

Whatever Mrs. Johnson's charms, she seems to have been a woman of good sense and some literary judgment. Johnson's grotesque appearance did not prevent her from saying to her daughter on their first introduction, "This is *the most sensible man I ever met." Her praises were*, we may believe, sweeter to him than those of the severest critics, or the most fervent of personal flatterers. Like all good men, Johnson loved good women, and liked to have on hand a flirtation or two, as warm as might be within the bounds of due decorum. But nothing affected his fidelity to his Tetty or displaced her image in his mind. He remembered her in many solemn prayers, and such words as "this was dear Tetty's book:" or, "this was a prayer which dear Tetty was accustomed to say," were found written by him in many of her books of devotion.

Mrs. Johnson had one other recommendation—a fortune, namely, of £800—little enough, even then, as a provision for the support of the married pair, but enough to help Johnson to make a fresh start. In 1736, there appeared an advertisement in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages by Samuel Johnson." If, as seems probable, Mrs. Johnson's

money supplied the funds for this venture, it was an unlucky speculation.

Johnson was not fitted to be a pedagogue. Success in that profession implies skill in the management of pupils, but perhaps still more decidedly in the management of parents. Johnson had little qualifications in either way. As a teacher he would probably have been alternately despotic and over-indulgent; and, on the other hand, a single glance at the rough Dominie Sampson would be enough to frighten the ordinary parent off his premises. Very few pupils came, and they seem to have profited little, if a story as told of two of his pupils refers to this time. After some months of instruction in English history, he asked them who had destroyed the monasteries? One of them gave no answer; the other replied "Jesus Christ." Johnson, however, could boast of one eminent pupil in David Garrick, though, by Garrick's account, his master was of little service except as affording an excellent mark for his early powers of ridicule. The school, or "academy," failed after a year and a half; and Johnson, once more at a loss for employment, resolved to try the great experiment, made so often and so often unsuccessfully. He left Lichfield to seek his fortune in London. Garrick accompanied him, and the two brought a common letter of introduction to the master of an academy from Gilbert Walmsley, registrar of the Prerogative Court in Lichfield. Long afterwards Johnson took an opportunity in the *Lives of the Poets*, of expressing his warm regard for the memory of his early friend, to whom he had been recommended by a community of literary tastes, in spite of party differences and great inequality of age. Walmsley says in his letter, that "one Johnson" is about to accompany Garrick to London, in order to try his fate with a tragedy and get himself em-

ployed in translation. Johnson, he adds, "is a very good scholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy writer."

The letter is dated March 2nd, 1737. Before recording what is known of his early career thus started, it will be well to take a glance at the general condition of the profession of Literature in England at this period.

CHAPTER II.

LITERARY CAREER.

"No man but a blockhead," said Johnson, "ever wrote except for money." The doctrine is, of course, perfectly outrageous, and specially calculated to shock people who like to keep it for their private use, instead of proclaiming it in public. But it is a good expression of that huge contempt for the foppery of high-flown sentiment which, as is not uncommon with Johnson, passes into something which would be cynical if it were not half-humorous. In this case it implies also the contempt of the professional for the amateur. Johnson despised gentlemen who dabbled in his craft, as a man whose life is devoted to music or painting despises the ladies and gentlemen who treat those arts as fashionable accomplishments. An author was, according to him, a man who turned out books as a bricklayer turns out houses or a tailor coats. So long as he supplied a good article and got a fair price, he was a fool to grumble, and a humbug to affect loftier motives.

Johnson was not the first professional author, in this sense, but perhaps the first man who made the profession respectable. The principal habitat of authors, in his age, was Grub Street—a region which, in later years, has ceased to be ashamed of itself, and has adopted the more pretentious

name Bohemia. The original Grub Street, it is said, first became associated with authorship during the increase of pamphlet literature, produced by the civil wars. Foxe, the martyrologist, was one of its original inhabitants. Another of its heroes was a certain Mr. Welby, of whom the sole record is, that he "lived there forty years without being seen of any." In fact, it was a region of holes and corners, calculated to illustrate that great advantage of London life, which a friend of Boswell's described by saying, that a man could there be always "close to his burrow." The "burrow" which received the luckless wight, was indeed no pleasant refuge. Since poor Greene, in the earliest generation of dramatists, bought his "groat'sworth of wit with a million of repentance," too many of his brethren had trodden the path which led to hopeless misery or death in a tavern brawl. The history of men who had to support themselves by their pens, is a record of almost universal gloom. The names of Spenser, of Butler, and of Otway, are enough to remind us that even warm contemporary recognition was not enough to raise an author above the fear of dying in want of necessaries. The two great dictators of literature, Ben Jonson in the earlier and Dryden in the later part of the century, only kept their heads above water by help of the laureate's pittance, though reckless imprudence, encouraged by the precarious life, was the cause of much of their sufferings. Patronage gave but a fitful resource, and the author could hope at most but an occasional crust, flung to him from better provided tables.

In the happy days of Queen Anne, it is true, there had been a gleam of prosperity. Many authors, Addison, Congreve, Swift, and others of less name, had won by their pens not only temporary profits but permanent

places. The class which came into power at the Revolution was willing for a time, to share some of the public patronage with men distinguished for intellectual eminence. Patronage was liberal when the funds came out of other men's pockets. But, as the system of party government developed, it soon became evident that this involved a waste of power. There were enough political partisans to absorb all the comfortable sinecures to be had; and such money as was still spent upon literature, was given in return for services equally degrading to giver and receiver. Nor did the patronage of literature reach the poor inhabitants of Grub Street. Addison's poetical power might suggest or justify the gift of a place from his elegant friends; but a man like De Foe, who really looked to his pen for great part of his daily subsistence, was below the region of such prizes, and was obliged in later years not only to write inferior books for money, but to sell himself and act as a spy upon his fellows. One great man, it is true, made an independence by literature. Pope received some £8000 for his translation of Homer, by the then popular mode of subscription—a kind of compromise between the systems of patronage and public support. But his success caused little pleasure in Grub Street. No love was lost between the poet and the dwellers in this dismal region. Pope was its deadliest enemy, and carried on an internecine warfare with its inmates, which has enriched our language with a great satire, but which wasted his powers upon low objects, and tempted him into disgraceful artifices. The life of the unfortunate victims, pilloried in the *Dunciad* and accused of the unpardonable sins of poverty and dependence, was too often one which might have extorted sympathy even from a thin-skinned poet and critic.

Illustrations of the manners and customs of that Grub

Street of which Johnson was to become an inmate are only too abundant. The best writers of the day could tell of hardships endured in that dismal region. Richardson went on the sound principle of keeping his shop that his shop might keep him. But the other great novelists of the century have painted from life the miseries of an author's existence. Fielding, Smollett, and Goldsmith have described the poor wretches with a vivid force which gives sadness to the reflection that each of those great men was drawing upon his own experience, and that they each died in distress. The *Case of Authors by Profession* to quote the title of a pamphlet by Ralph, was indeed a wretched one, when the greatest of their number had an incessant struggle to keep the wolf from the door. The life of an author resembled the proverbial existence of the flying-fish, chased by enemies in sea and in air; he only escaped from the slavery of the bookseller's garret, to fly from the bailiff or rot in the debtor's ward or the spunging-house. Many strange half-pathetic and half-ludicrous anecdotes survive to recall the sorrows and the recklessness of the luckless scribblers who, like one of Johnson's acquaintance, "lived in London and hung loose upon society."

There was Samuel Boyse, for example, whose poem on the *Deity* is quoted with high praise by Fielding. Once Johnson had generously exerted himself for his comrade in misery, and collected enough money by sixpences to get the poet's clothes out of pawn. Two days afterwards, Boyse had spent the money and was found in bed, covered only with a blanket, through two holes in which he passed his arms to write. Boyse, it appears, when still in this position would lay out his last half-guinea to buy truffles and mushrooms for his last scrap of beef. Of another scribbler Johnson said, "I honour Derrick for his strength of mind.

One night when Floyd (another poor author) was wandering about the streets at night, he found Derrick fast asleep upon a bulk. Upon being suddenly awaked, Derrick started up; 'My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state; will you go home with me to my *lodgings?*'" Authors in such circumstances might be forced into such a wonderful contract as that which is reported to have been drawn up by one Gardner with Rolt and Christopher Smart. They were to write a monthly miscellany, sold at sixpence, and to have a third of the profits; but they were to write nothing else, and the contract was to last for ninety-nine years. Johnson himself summed up the trade upon earth by the lines in which Virgil describes the entrance to hell; thus translated by Dryden:—

> Just in the gate and in the jaws of hell,
> Revengeful cares and sullen sorrows dwell.
> And pale diseases and repining age,
> Want, fear, and famine's unresisted rage:
> Here toils and Death and Death's half-brother, Sleep—
> Forms, terrible to view, their sentry keep.

"Now," said Johnson, "almost all these apply exactly to an author; these are the concomitants of a printing-house."

Judicious authors, indeed, were learning how to make literature pay. Some of them belonged to the class who understood the great truth that the scissors are a very superior implement to the pen considered as a tool of literary trade. Such, for example, was that respectable Dr. John Campbell, whose parties Johnson ceased to frequent lest Scotchmen should say of any good bits of work, "Ay, ay, he has learnt this of Cawmell." Campbell, he said quaintly, was a good man, a pious man. "I am afraid he

has not been in the inside of a church for many years; but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat. This shows he has good principles,"—of which in fact there seems to be some less questionable evidence. Campbell supported himself by writings chiefly of the Encyclopedia or Gazetteer kind; and became, still in Johnson's phrase, "the richest author that ever grazed the common of literature." A more singular and less reputable character was that impudent quack, Sir John Hill, who, with his insolent attacks upon the Royal Society, pretentious botanical and medical compilations, plays, novels, and magazine articles, has long sunk into utter oblivion. It is said of him that he pursued every branch of literary quackery with greater contempt of character than any man of his time, and that he made as much as £1500 in a year;—three times as much, it is added, as any one writer ever made in the same period.

The political scribblers—the Arnalls, Gordons, Trenchards, Guthries, Ralphs, and Amhersts, whose names meet us in the notes to the *Dunciad* and in contemporary pamphlets and newspapers—form another variety of the class. Their general character may be estimated from Johnson's classification of the "Scribbler for a Party" with the "Commissioner of Excise," as the "two lowest of all human beings." "Ralph," says one of the notes to the *Dunciad*, "ended in the common sink of all such writers, a political newspaper." The prejudice against such employment has scarcely died out in our own day, and may be still traced in the account of Pendennis and his friend Warrington. People who do dirty work must be paid for it; and the Secret Committee which inquired into Walpole's administration reported that in ten years, from 1731 to 1741, a sum of £50,077 18*s.* had been paid to writers

and printers of newspapers. Arnall, now remembered chiefly by Pope's line—

Spirit of Arnall, aid me while I lie!

had received, in four years, £10,997 6s. 8d. of this amount. The more successful writers might look to pensions or preferment. Francis, for example, the translator of Horace, and the father, in all probability, of the most formidable of the whole tribe of such literary gladiators, received, it is said, 900*l.* a year for his work, besides being appointed to a rectory and the chaplaincy of Chelsea.

It must, moreover, be observed that the price of literary work was rising during the century, and that, in the latter half, considerable sums were received by successful writers. Religious as well as dramatic literature had begun to be commercially valuable. Baxter, in the previous century, made from 60*l.* to 80*l.* a year by his pen. The copyright of Tillotson's *Sermons* was sold, it is said, upon his death for £2500. Considerable sums were made by the plan of publishing by subscription. It is said that 4600 people subscribed to the two posthumous volumes of Conybeare's *Sermons*. A few poets trod in Pope's steps. Young made more than £3000 for the Satires called the *Universal Passion*, published, I think, on the same plan; and the Duke of Wharton is said, though the report is doubtful, to have given him £2000 for the same work. Gay made £1000 by his *Poems;* £400 for the copyright of the *Beggar's Opera*, and three times as much for its second part, *Polly*. Among historians, Hume seems to have received £700 a volume; Smollett made £2000 by his catchpenny rival publication; Henry made £3300 by his history; and Robertson, after the booksellers had made £6000 by his *History of Scotland*, sold his *Charles V.* for £4500.

Amongst the novelists, Fielding received £700 for *Tom Jones* and £1000 for *Amelia*; Sterne, for the second edition of the first part of *Tristram Shandy* and for two additional volumes, received [illegible] besides which Lord

[illegible]

fair price, according to Johnson, for a work by a then unknown author. By each of his plays he made about £500, and for the eight volumes of his *Natural History* he received 800 guineas. Towards the end of the century, Mrs. Radcliffe got £500 for the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and £800 for her last work, the *Italian*. Perhaps the largest sum given for a single book was £6000 paid to Hawkesworth for his account of the South Sea Expeditions. Horne Tooke received from £4000 to £5000 for the *Diversions of Purley*; and it is added by his biographer, though it seems to be incredible, that Hayley received no less than £11,000 for the *Life of Cowper*. This was, of course, in the present century, when we are already approaching the period of Scott and Byron.

Such sums prove that some few authors might achieve independence by a successful work; and it is well to remember them in considering Johnson's life from the business point of view. Though he never grumbled at the booksellers, and on the contrary, was always ready to defend them as liberal men, he certainly failed, whether from carelessness or want of skill, to turn them to as much profit as many less celebrated rivals. Meanwhile, pecuniary success of this kind was beyond any reasonable hopes. A man who has to work like his own dependent Levett, and to make the "modest toil of every day" supply "the wants of every day," must discount his talents until he

can secure leisure for some more sustained effort. Johnson, coming up from the country to seek for work, could have but a slender prospect of rising above the ordinary level of his Grub Street companions and rivals. One publisher to whom he applied suggested to him that it would be his wisest course to buy a porter's knot and carry trunks; and, in the struggle which followed, Johnson must sometimes have been tempted to regret that the advice was not taken.

The details of the ordeal through which he was now to pass have naturally vanished. Johnson, long afterwards, burst into tears on recalling the trials of this period. But, at the time, no one was interested in noting the history of an obscure literary drudge, and it has not been described by the sufferer himself. What we know is derived from a few letters and incidental references of Johnson in later days. On first arriving in London he was almost destitute, and had to join with Garrick in raising a loan of five pounds, which, we are glad to say, was repaid. He dined for eightpence at an ordinary: a cut of meat for sixpence, bread for a penny, and a penny to the waiter, making out the charge. One of his acquaintance had told him that a man might live in London for thirty pounds a year. Ten pounds would pay for clothes; a garret might be hired for eighteen-pence a week; if any one asked for an address, it was easy to reply, "I am to be found at such a place" Threepence laid out at a coffee-house would enable him to pass some hours a day in good company; dinner might be had for sixpence, a bread-and-milk breakfast for a penny, and supper was superfluous. On clean shirt day you might go abroad and pay visits. This leaves a surplus of nearly one pound from the thirty.

only subsistence for some time past." The application failed, however, and the want of a degree was equally fatal to another application to be admitted to practise at Doctor's Commons.

Literature was thus perforce Johnson's sole support; and by literature was meant, for the most part, drudgery of the kind indicated by the phrase, "translating for booksellers." While still in Lichfield, Johnson had, as I have said, written to Cave, proposing to become a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The letter was one of those which a modern editor receives by the dozen, and answers as perfunctorily as his conscience will allow. It seems, however, to have made some impression upon Cave, and possibly led to Johnson's employment by him on his first arrival in London. From 1738 he was employed both on the Magazine and in some jobs of translation.

Edward Cave, to whom we are thus introduced, was a man of some mark in the history of literature. Johnson always spoke of him with affection and afterwards wrote his life in complimentary terms. Cave, though a clumsy, phlegmatic person of little cultivation, seems to have been one of those men who, whilst destitute of real critical powers, have a certain instinct for recognizing the commercial value of literary wares. He had become by this time well-known as the publisher of a magazine which survives to this day. Journals containing summaries of passing events had already been started. Boyer's *Political State of Great Britain* began in 1711. *The Historical Register*, which added to a chronicle some literary notices, was started in 1716. *The Grub Street Journal* was another journal with fuller critical notices, which first appeared in 1730; and these two seem to have been superseded by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, started by Cave in the next year.

Johnson saw in it an opening for the employment of his literary talents; and regarded its contributors with that awe so natural in youthful aspirants, and at once so comic and pathetic to writers of a little experience. The names of many of Cave's staff are preserved in a note to Hawkins. One or two of them, such as Birch and Akenside, have still a certain interest for students of literature; but few have heard of the great Moses Browne, who was regarded as the great poetical light of the magazine. Johnson looked up to him as a leader in his craft, and was graciously taken by Cave to an alehouse in Clerkenwell, where, wrapped in a horseman's coat, and "a great bushy uncombed wig," he saw Mr. Browne sitting at the end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, and felt the satisfaction of a true hero-worshipper.

It is needless to describe in detail the literary task-work done by Johnson at this period, the Latin poems which he contributed in praise of Cave, and of Cave's friends, or the Jacobite squibs by which he relieved his anti-ministerialist feelings. One incident of the period doubtless refreshed the soul of many authors, who have shared Campbell's gratitude to Napoleon for the sole redeeming action of his life—the shooting of a bookseller. Johnson was employed by Osborne, a rough specimen of the trade, to make a catalogue of the Harleian Library. Osborne offensively reproved him for negligence, and Johnson knocked him down with a folio. The book with which the feat was performed (*Biblia Græca Septuaginta, fol.* 1594, Frankfort) was in existence in a bookseller's shop at Cambridge in 1812, and should surely have been placed in some safe author's museum.

The most remarkable of Johnson's performances as a hack writer deserves a brief notice. He was one of the

first of reporters. Cave published such reports of the debates in Parliament as were then allowed by the jealousy of the Legislature, under the title of *The Senate of Lilliput.* Johnson was the author of the debates from Nov. 1740 to February 1742. Persons were employed to attend in the two Houses, who brought home notes of the speeches, which were then put into shape by Johnson. Long afterwards, at a dinner at Foote's, Francis (the father of Junius) mentioned a speech of Pitt's as the best he had ever read, and superior to anything in Demosthenes. Hereupon Johnson replied, "I wrote that speech in a garret in Exeter Street." When the company applauded not only his eloquence but his impartiality, Johnson replied, "That is not quite true; I saved appearances tolerably well, but I took care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it." The speeches passed for a time as accurate; though, in truth, it has been proved and it is easy to observe, that they are, in fact, very vague reflections of the original. The editors of Chesterfield's Works published two of the speeches, and, to Johnson's considerable amusement, declared that one of them resembled Demosthenes and the other Cicero. It is plain enough to the modern reader that, if so, both of the ancient orators must have written true Johnsonese; and, in fact, the style of the true author is often as plainly marked in many of these compositions as in the *Rambler* or *Rasselas.* For this deception, such as it was, Johnson expressed penitence at the end of his life, though he said that he had ceased to write when he found that they were taken as genuine. He would not be "accessory to the propagation of falsehood."

Another of Johnson's works which appeared in 1744 requires notice both for its intrinsic merit, and its auto-

biographical interest. The most remarkable of his Grub-Street companions was the Richard Savage already mentioned. Johnson's life of him written soon after his death is one of his most forcible performances, and the best extant illustration of the life of the struggling authors of the time. Savage claimed to be the illegitimate son of the Countess of Macclesfield, who was divorced from her husband in the year of his birth on account of her connexion with his supposed father, Lord Rivers. According to the story, believed by Johnson, and published without her contradiction in the mother's lifetime, she not only disavowed her son, but cherished an unnatural hatred for him. She told his father that he was dead, in order that he might not be benefited by the father's will; she tried to have him kidnapped and sent to the plantations; and she did her best to prevent him from receiving a pardon when he had been sentenced to death for killing a man in a tavern brawl. However this may be, and there are reasons for doubt, the story was generally believed, and caused much sympathy for the supposed victim. Savage was at one time protected by the kindness of Steele, who published his story, and sometimes employed him as a literary assistant. When Steele became disgusted with him, he received generous help from the actor Wilks and from Mrs. Oldfield, to whom he had been introduced by some dramatic efforts. Then he was taken up by Lord Tyrconnel, but abandoned by him after a violent quarrel; he afterwards called himself a volunteer laureate, and received a pension of 50*l.* a year from Queen Caroline; on her death he was thrown into deep distress, and helped by a subscription to which Pope was the chief contributor, on condition of retiring to the country. Ultimately he quarrelled with his last protectors, and ended by dying in a debtor's prison.

Various poetical works, now utterly forgotten, obtained for him scanty profit. This career sufficiently reveals the character. Savage belonged to the very common type of men, who seem to employ their whole talents to throw away their chances in life, and to disgust every one who offers them a helping hand. He was, however, a man of some talent, though his poems are now hopelessly unreadable, and seems to have had a singular attraction for Johnson. The biography is curiously marked by Johnson's constant effort to put the best face upon faults, which he has too much love of truth to conceal. The explanation is, partly, that Johnson conceived himself to be avenging a victim of cruel oppression. "This mother," he says, after recording her vindictiveness, "is still alive, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was often defeated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting that the life, which she often endeavoured to destroy, was at last shortened by her maternal offices; that though she could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanic, or hasten the hand of the public executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of embittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death."

But it is also probable that Savage had a strong influence upon Johnson's mind at a very impressible part of his career. The young man, still ignorant of life and full of reverent enthusiasm for the literary magnates of his time, was impressed by the varied experience of his companion, and, it may be, flattered by his intimacy. Savage, he says admiringly, had enjoyed great opportunities of seeing the most conspicuous men of the day in their private life. He was shrewd and inquisitive enough to use his opportunities well. "More circumstances to constitute a critic on human life could not easily concur." The only phrase which survives

to justify this remark is Savage's statement about Walpole, that "the whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politics, and from politics to obscenity." We may, however, guess what was the special charm of the intercourse to Johnson. Savage was an expert in that science of human nature, learnt from experience not from books, upon which Johnson set so high a value, and of which he was destined to become the authorized expositor. There were, moreover, resemblances between the two men. They were both admired and sought out for their conversational powers. Savage, indeed, seems to have lived chiefly by the people who entertained him for talk, till he had disgusted them by his insolence and his utter disregard of time and propriety. He would, like Johnson, sit up talking beyond midnight, and next day decline to rise till dinner-time, though his favourite drink was not, like Johnson's, free from intoxicating properties. Both of them had a lofty pride, which Johnson heartily commends in Savage, though he has difficulty in palliating some of its manifestations. One of the stories reminds us of an anecdote already related of Johnson himself. Some clothes had been left for Savage at a coffeehouse by a person who, out of delicacy, concealed his name. Savage, however, resented some want of ceremony, and refused to enter the house again till the clothes had been removed.

What was honourable pride in Johnson was, indeed, simple arrogance in Savage. He asked favours, his biographer says, without submission, and resented refusal as an insult. He had too much pride to acknowledge, but not too much to receive, obligations; enough to quarrel with his charitable benefactors, but not enough to make him rise to independence of their charity. His pension would have sufficed to keep him, only that as soon as he received it he

duct befitting its inmates. One characteristic conclusion is indicated in the opening passage of the life. It has always been observed, he says, that men eminent by nature or fortune are not generally happy: "whether it be that apparent superiority incites great designs, and great designs are naturally liable to fatal miscarriages; or that the general lot of mankind is misery, and the misfortunes of those, whose eminence drew upon them an universal attention, have been more carefully recorded because they were more generally observed, and have in reality been only more conspicuous than those of others, not more frequent or more severe."

The last explanation was that which really commended itself to Johnson. Nobody had better reason to know that obscurity might conceal a misery as bitter as any that fell to the lot of the most eminent. The gloom due to his constitutional temperament was intensified by the sense that he and his wife were dependent upon the goodwill of a narrow and ignorant tradesman for the scantiest maintenance. How was he to reach some solid standing-ground above the hopeless mire of Grub Street? As a journeyman author he could make both ends meet, but only on condition of incessant labour. Illness and misfortune would mean constant dependence upon charity or bondage to creditors. To get ahead of the world it was necessary to distinguish himself in some way from the herd of needy competitors. He had come up from Lichfield with a play in his pocket, but the play did not seem at present to have much chance of emerging. Meanwhile he published a poem which did something to give him a general reputation.

London—an imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal—was published in May, 1738. The plan was doubtless suggested by Pope's imitations of Horace, which had

recently appeared. Though necessarily following the lines of Juvenal's poem, and conforming to the conventional fashion of the time, both in sentiment and versification, the poem has a biographical significance. It is indeed odd to find Johnson, who afterwards thought of London ... more

...

corruption of towns, and singing the praises ... country life. Doubtless, the young writer was like other young men, taking up a strain still imitative and artificial. He has a quiet smile at Savage in the life, because in his retreat to Wales, that enthusiast declared that he "could not debar himself from the happiness which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or lose the opportunity of listening without intermission to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happiness of a country life." In *London*, this insincere cockney adopts Savage's view. Thales, who is generally supposed to represent Savage (and this coincidence seems to confirm the opinion), is to retire "from the dungeons of the Strand," and to end a healthy life in pruning walks and twining bowers in his garden.

> There every bush with nature's music rings,
> There every breeze bears health upon its wings.

... fect sincerity ...

as seen by the poor drudge from a Grub Street ... bably presented a prospect gloomy enough to make even Johnson long at times for rural solitude. The poem reflects, too, the ordinary talk of the heterogeneous band of patriots,

Jacobites, and disappointed Whigs, who were beginning to gather enough strength to threaten Walpole's long tenure of power. Many references to contemporary politics illustrate Johnson's sympathy with the inhabitants of the contemporary Cave of Adullam.

This poem, as already stated, attracted Pope's notice, who made a curious note on a scrap of paper sent with it to a friend. Johnson is described as "a man afflicted with an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes so as to make him a sad spectacle." This seems to have been the chief information obtained by Pope about the anonymous author, of whom he had said, on first reading the poem, this man will soon be *déterré*. *London* made a certain noise; it reached a second edition in a week, and attracted various patrons, among others, General Oglethorpe, celebrated by Pope, and through a long life the warm friend of Johnson. One line, however, in the poem printed in capital letters, gives the moral which was doubtless most deeply felt by the author, and which did not lose its meaning in the years to come. This mournful truth, he says,—

> Is everywhere confess'd,
> Slow rises worth by poverty depress'd.

Ten years later (in January 1749) appeared the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, an imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. The difference in tone shows how deeply this and similar truths had been impressed upon its author in the interval. Though still an imitation, it is as significant as the most original work could be of Johnson's settled views of life. It was written at a white heat, as indeed Johnson wrote all his best work. Its strong Stoical morality, its profound and melancholy illustrations of the old and ever new sen-

timent, *Vanitas Vanitatum*, make it perhaps the most impressive poem of the kind in the language. The lines on the scholar's fate show that the iron had entered his soul in the interval. Should the scholar succeed beyond expectation in his labours and escape melancholy and disease, yet, he says,—

> Yet hope not life from grief and danger free,
> Nor think the doom of man reversed on thee;
> Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes
> And pause awhile from letters, to be wise;
> There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
> Toil, envy, want, the patron and the jail;
> See nations, slowly wise and meanly just,
> To buried merit raise the tardy bust
> If dreams yet flatter, once again attend
> Hear Lydiat's life and Galileo's end.

For the "patron," Johnson had originally written the "garret." The change was made after an experience of patronage to be presently described in connexion with the *Dictionary*.

For *London* Johnson received ten guineas, and for the *Vanity of Human Wishes* fifteen. Though indirectly valuable, as increasing his reputation, such work was not very profitable. The most promising career in a pecuniary sense was still to be found on the stage. Novelists were not yet the rivals of dramatists, and many authors had made enough by a successful play to float them through a year or two. Johnson had probably been determined by his knowledge of this fact to write the tragedy of *Irene*. No other excuse at least can be given for the composition of one of the heaviest and most unreadable of dramatic performances, interesting now, if interesting at all, solely as a curious example of the result of bestowing great powers upon a totally uncongenial task. Young men,

however, may be pardoned for such blunders if they are not repeated, and Johnson, though he seems to have retained a fondness for his unlucky performance, never indulged in playwriting after leaving Lichfield. The best thing connected with the play was Johnson's retort to his friend Walmsley, the Lichfield registrar. "How," asked Walmsley, "can you contrive to plunge your heroine into deeper calamity?" "Sir," said Johnson, "I can put her into the spiritual court." Even Boswell can only say for *Irene* that it is "entitled to the praise of superior excellence," and admits its entire absence of dramatic power. Garrick, who had become manager of Drury Lane, produced his friend's work in 1749. The play was carried through nine nights by Garrick's friendly zeal, so that the author had his three nights' profits. For this he received £195 17*s.* and for the copy he had £100. People probably attended, as they attend modern representations of legitimate drama, rather from a sense of duty, than in the hope of pleasure. The heroine originally had to speak two lines with a bowstring round her neck. The situation produced cries of murder, and she had to go off the stage alive. The objectionable passage was removed, but *Irene* was on the whole a failure, and has never, I imagine, made another appearance. When asked how he felt upon his ill-success, he replied "like the monument," and indeed he made it a principle throughout life to accept the decision of the public like a sensible man without murmurs.

Meanwhile, Johnson was already embarked upon an undertaking of a very different kind. In 1747 he had put forth a plan for an English Dictionary, addressed at the suggestion of Dodsley, to Lord Chesterfield, then Secretary of State, and the great contemporary Mæcenas. Johnson had apparently been maturing the scheme for

some time. "I know," he says in the "plan," that "the work in which I engaged is generally considered as drudgery for the blind, as the proper toil of artless industry, a book that requires neither the light of learning nor the activity of genius, but may be successfully performed without any higher quality than that of bearing burdens with dull patience, and beating the track of the alphabet with sluggish resolution." He adds in a sub-sarcastic tone, that although princes and statesmen had once thought it honourable to patronize dictionaries, he had considered such benevolent acts to be "prodigies, recorded rather to raise wonder than expectation," and he was accordingly pleased and surprised to find that Chesterfield took an interest in his undertaking. He proceeds to lay down the general principles upon which he intends to frame his work, in order to invite timely suggestions and repress unreasonable expectations. At this time, humble as his aspirations might be, he took a view of the possibilities open to him which had to be lowered before the publication of the dictionary. He shared the illusion that a language might be "fixed" by making a catalogue of its words. In the preface which appeared with the completed work, he explains very sensibly the vanity of any such expectation. Whilst all human affairs are changing, it is, as he says, absurd to imagine that the language which repeats all human thoughts and feelings can remain unaltered.

A dictionary, as Johnson conceived it, was in fact work for a "harmless drudge," the definition of a lexicographer given in the book itself. Etymology in a scientific sense was as yet non-existent, and Johnson was not in this respect ahead of his contemporaries. To collect all the words in the language, to define their meanings as accurately as

might be, to give the obvious or whimsical guesses at Etymology suggested by previous writers, and to append a good collection of illustrative passages was the sum of his ambition. Any systematic tracing of the historical processes by which a particular language had been developed was unknown, and of course the result could not be anticipated. The work, indeed, required a keen logical faculty of definition, and wide reading of the English literature of the two preceding centuries; but it could of course give no play either for the higher literary faculties or faculties of scientific investigation. A dictionary in Johnson's sense was the highest kind of work to which a literary journeyman could be set, but it was still work for a journeyman, not for an artist. He was not adding to literature, but providing a useful implement for future men of letters.

Johnson had thus got on hand the biggest job that could be well undertaken by a good workman in his humble craft. He was to receive fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds for the whole, and he expected to finish it in three years. The money, it is to be observed, was to satisfy not only Johnson but several copyists employed in the mechanical part of the work. It was advanced by instalments, and came to an end before the conclusion of the book. Indeed, it appeared when accounts were settled, that he had received a hundred pounds more than was due. He could, however, pay his way for the time, and would gain a reputation enough to ensure work in future. The period of extreme poverty had probably ended when Johnson got permanent employment on the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He was not elevated above the need of drudgery and economy, but he might at least be free from the dread of neglect. He could

command his market—such as it was. The necessity of steady labour was probably useful in repelling his fits of melancholy. His name was beginning to be known, and men of reputation were seeking his acquaintance. In the winter of 1749 he formed a club, which met weekly at a "famous beef-steak house" in Ivy Lane. Among its members were Hawkins, afterwards his biographer, and two friends, Bathurst a physician, and Hawkesworth an author, for the first of whom he entertained an unusually strong affection. The Club, like its more famous successor, gave Johnson an opportunity of displaying and improving his great conversational powers. He was already dreaded for his prowess in argument, his dictatorial manners and vivid flashes of wit and humour, the more effective from the habitual gloom and apparent heaviness of the discourser.

The talk of this society probably suggested topics for the *Rambler*, which appeared at this time, and caused Johnson's fame to spread further beyond the literary circles of London. The wit and humour have, indeed, left few traces upon its ponderous pages, for the *Rambler* marks the culminating period of Johnson's worst qualities of style. The pompous and involved language seems indeed to be a fit clothing for the melancholy reflections which are its chief staple, and in spite of its unmistakable power it is as heavy reading as the heavy class of lay-sermonizing to which it belongs. Such literature, however, is often strangely popular in England, and the *Rambler*, though its circulation was limited, gave to Johnson his position as a great practical moralist. He took his literary title, one may say, from the *Rambler*, as the more familiar title was derived from the *Dictionary*.

The *Rambler* was published twice a week from March

20th, 1750, to March 17th, 1752. In five numbers alone he received assistance from friends, and one of these, written by Richardson, is said to have been the only number which had a large sale. The circulation rarely exceeded 500, though ten English editions were published in the author's lifetime, besides Scotch and Irish editions. The payment, however, namely, two guineas a number, must have been welcome to Johnson, and the friendship of many distinguished men of the time was a still more valuable reward. A quaint story illustrates the hero-worship of which Johnson now became the object. Dr. Burney, afterwards an intimate friend, had introduced himself to Johnson by letter in consequence of the *Rambler*, and the plan of the *Dictionary*. The admiration was shared by a friend of Burney's, a Mr. Bewley, known—in Norfolk at least—as the "philosopher of Massingham." When Burney at last gained the honour of a personal interview, he wished to procure some "relic" of Johnson for his friend. He cut off some bristles from a hearth-broom in the doctor's chambers, and sent them in a letter to his fellow-enthusiast. Long afterwards Johnson was pleased to hear of this simple-minded homage, and not only sent a copy of the *Lives of the Poets* to the rural philosopher, but deigned to grant him a personal interview.

Dearer than any such praise was the approval of Johnson's wife. She told him that, well as she had thought of him before, she had not considered him equal to such a performance. The voice that so charmed him was soon to be silenced for ever. Mrs. Johnson died (March 17th, 1752) three days after the appearance of the last *Rambler*. The man who has passed through such a trial knows well that, whatever may be in store for him in the dark future, fate can have no heavier blow in reserve. Though John-

son once acknowledged to Boswell, when in a placid humour, that happier days had come to him in his old age than in his early life, he would probably have added that though fame and friendship and freedom from the harrowing cares of poverty might cause his life to be more equably happy, yet their rewards could represent but a faint and mocking reflection of the best moments of a happy marriage. His strong mind and tender nature reeled under the blow. Here is one pathetic little note written to the friend, Dr. Taylor, who had come to him in his distress. That which first announced the calamity, and which, said Taylor, "expressed grief in the strongest manner he had ever read," is lost.

"Dear Sir,—Let me have your company and instruction. Do not live away from me. My distress is great.

"Pray desire Mrs Taylor to inform me what mourning I should buy for my mother and Miss Porter, and bring a note in writing with you.

"Remember me in your prayers, for vain is the help of man.

"I am, dear sir,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

We need not regret that a veil is drawn over the details of the bitter agony of his passage through the valley of the shadow of death. It is enough to put down the words which he wrote long afterwards when visibly approaching the close of all human emotions and interests :—

"*This is the day on which, in 1752, dear Tetty died.* I have now uttered a prayer of repentance and contrition; perhaps Tetty knows that I prayed for her. Perhaps Tetty is now praying for me. God help me. Thou, God, art merciful, hear my prayers and enable me to trust in Thee.

"We were married almost seventeen years, and have now been parted thirty."

It seems half profane, even at this distance of time, to pry into grief so deep and so lasting. Johnson turned for relief to that which all sufferers know to be the only remedy for sorrow—hard labour. He set to work in his garret, an inconvenient room, "because," he said, "in that room only I never saw Mrs. Johnson." He helped his friend Hawkesworth in the *Adventurer*, a new periodical of the *Rambler* kind; but his main work was the *Dictionary*, which came out at last in 1755. Its appearance was the occasion of an explosion of wrath which marks an epoch in our literature. Johnson, as we have seen, had dedicated the Plan to Lord Chesterfield; and his language implies that they had been to some extent in personal communication. Chesterfield's fame is in curious antithesis to Johnson's. He was a man of great abilities, and seems to have deserved high credit for some parts of his statesmanship. As a Viceroy in Ireland in particular he showed qualities rare in his generation. To Johnson he was known as the nobleman who had a wide social influence as an acknowledged *arbiter elegantiarum*, and who reckoned among his claims some of that literary polish in which the earlier generation of nobles had certainly been superior to their successors. The art of life expounded in his *Letters* differs from Johnson's as much as the elegant diplomatist differs from the rough intellectual gladiator of Grub Street. Johnson spoke his mind of his rival without reserve. "I thought," he said, "that this man had been a Lord among wits; but I find he is only a wit among Lords." And of the *Letters* he said more keenly that they taught the morals of a harlot and the manners of a dancing-master. Chesterfield's opinion of Johnson is indicated by the description

do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, should less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

The letter is one of those knock-down blows to which no answer is possible, and upon which comment is superfluous. It was, as Mr. Carlyle calls it, "the far-famed blast of doom proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield and through him, of the listening world, that patronage should be no more."

That is all that can be said; yet perhaps it should be added that Johnson remarked that he had once received £10 from Chesterfield, though he thought the assistance too inconsiderable to be mentioned in such a letter. Hawkins also states that Chesterfield sent overtures to Johnson through two friends, one of whom, long Sir Thomas Robinson, stated that, if he were rich enough (a judicious clause) he would himself settle £500 a year upon Johnson. Johnson replied that if the first peer of the realm made such an offer, he would show him the way downstairs. Hawkins is startled at this insolence, and at Johnson's uniform assertion that an offer of money was an insult. We cannot tell what was the history of the £10; but Johnson, in spite of Hawkins's righteous indignation, was in fact too

proud to be a beggar, and owed to his pride his escape from the fate of Savage.

The appearance of the *Dictionary* placed Johnson in the position described soon afterwards by Smollett. He was henceforth "the great Cham of Literature"—a monarch sitting in the chair previously occupied by his namesake, Ben, by Dryden, and by Pope; but which has since that time been vacant. The world of literature has become too large for such authority. Complaints were not seldom uttered at the time. Goldsmith has urged that Boswell wished to make a monarchy of what ought to be a republic. Goldsmith, who would have been the last man to find serious fault with the dictator, thought the dictatorship objectionable. Some time indeed was still to elapse before we can say that Johnson was firmly seated on the throne; but the *Dictionary* and the *Rambler* had given him a position not altogether easy to appreciate, now that the *Dictionary* has been superseded and the *Rambler* gone out of fashion. His name was the highest at this time (1755) in the ranks of pure literature. The fame of Warburton possibly bulked larger for the moment, and one of his flatterers was comparing him to the Colossus which bestrides the petty world of contemporaries. But Warburton had subsided into episcopal repose, and literature had been for him a stepping-stone rather than an ultimate aim. Hume had written works of far more enduring influence than Johnson; but they were little read though generally abused, and scarcely belong to the purely literary history. The first volume of his *History of England* had appeared (1754), but had not succeeded. The second was just coming out. Richardson was still giving laws to his little seraglio of adoring women; Fielding had died (1754), labour and dissipation; Smollett was active in th

trade, but not in such a way as to increase his own dignity or that of his employment; Gray was slowly writing a few lines of exquisite verse in his retirement at Cambridge; two young Irish adventurers, Burke and Goldsmith, were just coming to London to try their fortune; Adam Smith made his first experiment as an author by reviewing the *Dictionary* in the *Edinburgh Review;* Robertson had not yet appeared as a historian; Gibbon was at Lausanne repenting of his old brief lapse into Catholicism as an act of undergraduate's folly; and Cowper, after three years of "giggling and making giggle" with Thurlow in an attorney's office, was now entered at the Temple and amusing himself at times with literature in company with such small men of letters as Colman, Bonnell Thornton, and Lloyd. It was a slack tide of literature; the generation of Pope had passed away and left no successors, and no writer of the time could be put in competition with the giant now known as "Dictionary Johnson."

When the last sheet of the *Dictionary* had been carried to the publisher, Millar, Johnson asked the messenger, "What did he say?" "Sir," said the messenger, "he said, 'Thank God I have done with him.'" "I am glad," replied Johnson, "that he thanks God for anything." Thankfulness for relief from seven years' toil seems to have been Johnson's predominant feeling: and he was not anxious for a time to take any new labours upon his shoulders. Some years passed which have left few traces either upon his personal or his literary history. He contributed a good many reviews in 1756-7 to the *Literary Magazine*, one of which, a review of Soame Jenyns, is amongst his best performances. To a weekly paper he contributed for two years, from April, 1758, to April, 1760, a set of essays called the *Idler*, on the old *Rambler* plan. He did some

small literary cobbler's work, receiving a guinea for a prospectus to a newspaper and ten pounds for correcting a volume of poetry. He had advertised in 1756 a new edition of Shakspeare which was to appear by Christmas, 1757: but he dawdled over it so unconscionably that it did not appear for nine years; and then only in consequence of taunts from Churchill, who accused him with too much plausibility of cheating his subscribers.

He for subscribers baits his hook;
And takes your cash: but where's the book?
No matter where; wise fear, you know
Forbids the robbing of a foe;
But what to serve our private ends
Forbids the cheating of our friends?

In truth, his constitutional indolence seems to have gained advantages over him, when the stimulus of a heavy task was removed. In his meditations, there are many complaints of his "sluggishness" and resolutions of amendment. "A kind of strange oblivion has spread over me," he says in April, 1764, "so that I know not what has become of the last years, and perceive that incidents and intelligence pass over me without leaving any impression."

It seems, however, that he was still frequently in difficulties. Letters are preserved showing that in the beginning of 1756, Richardson became surety for him for a debt, and lent him six guineas to release him from arrest. An event which happened three years later illustrates his position and character. In January, 1759, his mother died at the age of ninety. Johnson was unable to come to Lichfield, and some deeply pathetic letters to her and her stepdaughter, who lived with her, record his emotions. Here is the last sad farewell upon the snapping of the most sacred of human ties.

"Dear Honoured Mother," he says in a letter enclosed to Lucy Porter, the step-daughter, "neither your condition nor your character make it fit for me to say much. You have been the best mother, and I believe the best woman in the world. I thank you for your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness of all that I have done ill, and of all that I have omitted to do well. God grant you His Holy Spirit, and receive you to everlasting happiness for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Lord Jesus receive your spirit. I am, dear, dear mother,

"Your dutiful son,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON."

Johnson managed to raise twelve guineas, six of them borrowed from his printer, to send to his dying mother. In order to gain money for her funeral expenses and some small debts, he wrote the story of *Rasselas*. It was composed in the evenings of a single week, and sent to press as it was written. He received £100 for this, perhaps the most successful of his minor writings, and £25 for a second edition. It was widely translated and universally admired. One of the strangest of literary coincidences is the contemporary appearance of this work and Voltaire's *Candide;* to which, indeed, it bears in some respects so strong a resemblance that, but for Johnson's apparent contradiction, we would suppose that he had at least heard some description of its design. The two stories, though widely differing in tone and style, are among the most powerful expressions of the melancholy produced in strong intellects by the sadness and sorrows of the world. The literary excellence of *Candide* has secured for it a wider and more enduring popularity than has fallen to the lot of Johnson's far heavier production. But

Rasselas is a book of singular force, and bears the most characteristic impression of Johnson's peculiar temperament.

A great change was approaching in Johnson's circumstances. When George III. came to the throne, it struck some of his advisers that it would be well, as Boswell puts it, to open "a new and brighter prospect to men of literary merit." This commendable design was carried out by offering to Johnson a pension of three hundred a year. Considering that such men as Horace Walpole and his like were enjoying sinecures of more than twice as many thousands for being their father's sons, the bounty does not strike one as excessively liberal. It seems to have been really intended as some set-off against other pensions bestowed upon various hangers-on of the Scotch prime minister, Bute. Johnson was coupled with the contemptible scribbler, Shebbeare, who had lately been in the pillory for a Jacobite libel (a "he-bear" and a "she-bear," said the facetious newspapers), and when a few months afterwards a pension of £200 a year was given to the old actor, Sheridan, Johnson growled out that it was time for him to resign his own. Somebody kindly repeated the remark to Sheridan, who would never afterwards speak to Johnson.

The pension, though very welcome to Johnson, who seems to have been in real distress at the time, suggested some difficulty. Johnson had unluckily spoken of a pension in his *Dictionary* as "generally understood to mean pay given to a State hireling for treason to his country." He was assured, however, that he did not come within the definition; and that the reward was given for what he had done, not for anything that he was expected to do. After some hesitation, Johnson consented to accept the

CHAPTER III

JOHNSON AND HIS FRIENDS.

It is not till some time after Johnson had come into the enjoyment of his pension, that we first see him through the eyes of competent observers. The Johnson of our knowledge, the most familiar figure to all students of English literary history had already long passed the prime of life, and done the greatest part of his literary work. His character, in the common phrase, had been "formed" years before; as, indeed, people's characters are chiefly formed in the cradle; and, not only his character, but the habits which are learnt in the great schoolroom of the world were fixed beyond any possibility of change. The strange eccentricities which had now become a second nature, amazed the society in which he was for over twenty years a prominent figure. Unsympathetic observers, those especially to whom the Chesterfield type represented the ideal of humanity, were simply disgusted or repelled. The man, they thought, might be in his place at a Grub Street pot-house; but had no business in a lady's drawing-room. If he had been modest and retiring, they might have put up with his defects; but Johnson was not a person whose qualities, good or bad, were of a kind to be ignored. Naturally enough, the fashionable world cared little for the rugged old giant.

"The great," said Johnson, "had tried him and given him up; they had seen enough of him;" and his reason was pretty much to the purpose. "Great lords and great ladies don't love to have their mouths stopped," especially not, one may add, by an unwashed fist.

It is easy to blame them now. Everybody can see that a saint in beggar's rags is intrinsically better than a sinner in gold lace. But the principle is one of those which serves us for judging the dead, much more than for regulating our own conduct. Those, at any rate, may throw the first stone at the Horace Walpoles and Chesterfields, who are quite certain that they would ask a modern Johnson to their houses. The trial would be severe. Poor Mrs. Boswell complained grievously of her husband's idolatry. "I have seen many a bear led by a man," she said; "but I never before saw a man led by a bear." The truth is, as Boswell explains, that the sage's uncouth habits, such as turning the candles' heads downwards to make them burn more brightly, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, "could not but be disagreeable to a lady."

He had other habits still more annoying to people of delicate perceptions. A hearty despiser of all affectations, he despised especially the affectation of indifference to the pleasures of the table. "For my part," he said, "I mind my belly very studiously and very carefully, for I look upon it that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else." Avowing this principle he would innocently give himself the airs of a scientific epicure. "I, madam," he said to the terror of a lady with whom he was about to sup, "who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home, for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of

his cook, whereas, madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge." But his pretensions to exquisite taste are by no means borne out by independent witnesses. "He laughs," said Tom Davies, "like a rhinoceros," and he seems to have eaten like a wolf—savagely, silently, and with undiscriminating fury. He was not a pleasant object during this performance. He was totally absorbed in the business of the moment, a strong perspiration came out, and the veins of his forehead swelled. He liked coarse satisfying dishes—boiled pork and veal-pie stuffed with plums and sugar; and in regard to wine, he seems to have accepted the doctrines of the critic of a certain fluid professing to be port, who asked, "What more can you want? It is black, and it is thick, and it makes you drunk." Claret, as Johnson put it, "is the liquor for boys, and port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy." He could, however, refrain, though he could not be moderate, and for all the latter part of his life, from 1766, he was a total abstainer. Nor, it should be added, does he ever appear to have sought for more than exhilaration from wine. His earliest intimate friend, Hector, said that he had never but once seen him drunk.

His appetite for more innocent kinds of food was equally excessive. He would eat seven or eight peaches before breakfast, and declared that he had only once in his life had as much wall-fruit as he wished. His consumption of tea was prodigious, beyond all precedent. Hawkins quotes Bishop Burnet as having drunk sixteen large cups every morning, a feat which would entitle him to be reckoned as a rival. "A hardened and shameless tea-drinker," Johnson called himself, who "with tea amuses the evenings, with tea solaces the midnights, and with

welcomes the mornings." One of his teapots, preserved by a relic-hunter, contained two quarts, and he professed to have consumed five and twenty cups at a sitting. Poor Mrs. Thrale complains that he often kept her up making tea for him till four in the morning. His reluctance to go to bed was due to the fact that his nights were periods of intense misery; but the vast potations of tea can scarcely have tended to improve them.

The huge frame was clad in the raggedest of garments, until his acquaintance with the Thrales led to a partial reform. His wigs were generally burnt in front, from his shortsighted knack of reading with his head close to the candle; and at the Thrales, the butler stood ready to effect a change of wigs as he passed into the dining-room. Once or twice we have accounts of his bursting into unusual splendour. He appeared at the first representation of *Irene* in a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold; and on one of his first interviews with Goldsmith he took the trouble to array himself decently, because Goldsmith was reported to have justified slovenly habits by the precedent of the leader of his craft. Goldsmith, judging by certain famous suits, seems to have profited by the hint more than his preceptor. As a rule, Johnson's appearance, before he became a pensioner, was worthy of the proverbial manner of Grub Street. Beauclerk used to describe how he had once taken a French lady of distinction to see Johnson in his chambers. On descending the staircase they heard a noise like thunder. Johnson was pursuing them, struck by a sudden sense of the demands upon his gallantry. He brushed in between Beauclerk and the lady, and seizing her hand conducted her to her coach. A crowd of people collected to stare at the sage, dressed in rusty brown, with a pair of old shoes for slippers, a shrivelled wig on the top

of his head, and with shirtsleeves and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. In those days, clergymen and physicians were only just abandoning the use of their official costume in the streets, and Johnson's slovenly habits were even more marked than they would be at present. "I have no passion for clean linen," he once remarked, and it is to be feared that he must sometimes have offended more senses than one.

In spite of his uncouth habits of dress and manners, Johnson claimed and, in a sense, with justice, to be a polite man. "I look upon myself," he said once to Boswell, "as a very polite man." He could show the stately courtesy of a sound Tory, who cordially accepts the principle of social distinction, but has far too strong a sense of self-respect to fancy that compliance with the ordinary conventions can possibly lower his own position. Rank of the spiritual kind was especially venerable to him. "I should as soon have thought of contradicting a bishop," was a phrase which marked the highest conceivable degree of deference to a man whom he respected. Nobody, again, could pay more effective compliments, when he pleased; and the many female friends who have written of him agree, that he could be singularly attractive to women. Women are, perhaps, more inclined than men to forgive external roughness in consideration of the great charm of deep tenderness in a thoroughly masculine nature. A characteristic phrase was his remark to Miss Monckton. She had declared, in opposition to one of Johnson's prejudices, that Sterne's writings were pathetic: "I am sure," she said, "they have affected me." "Why," said Johnson, smiling and rolling himself about, "that is because, dearest, you are a dunce!" When she mentioned this to him some time afterwards he replied: "Madam, if I had

thought so, I certainly should not have said it." The truth could not be more neatly put.

Boswell notes, with some surprise, that when Johnson dined with Lord Monboddo he insisted upon rising when the ladies left the table, and took occasion to observe that politeness was "fictitious benevolence," and equally useful in common intercourse. Boswell's surprise seems to indicate that Scotchmen in those days were even greater bears than Johnson. He always insisted, as Miss Reynolds tells us, upon showing ladies to their carriages through Bolt Court, though his dress was such that her readers would, she thinks, be astonished that any man in his senses should have shown himself in it abroad or even at home Another odd indication of Johnson's regard for good manners, so far as his lights would take him, was the extreme disgust with which he often referred to a certain footman in Paris, who used his fingers in place of sugar-tongs. So far as Johnson could recognize bad manners he was polite enough, though unluckily the limitation is one of considerable importance.

Johnson's claims to politeness were sometimes, it is true, put in a rather startling form. "Every man of any education," he once said to the amazement of his hearers, "would rather be called a rascal than accused of deficiency in the graces." Gibbon, who was present, slily inquired of a lady whether among all her acquaintance she could not find *one* exception. According to Mrs. Thrale, he went even further. Dr. Barnard, he said, was the only man who had ever done justice to his good breeding; "and you may observe," he added, "that I am well-bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity." He proceeded, according to Mrs. Thrale, but the report a little taxes our faith, to claim the virtues not only of respecting ceremony, but of never

contradicting or interrupting his hearers. It is rather odd that Dr. Barnard had once a sharp altercation with Johnson, and avenged himself by a sarcastic copy of verses in which, after professing to learn perfections from different friends, he says,—

> Johnson shall teach me how to place,
> In varied light, each borrow'd grace;
> From him I'll learn to write;
> Copy his clear familiar style,
> And by the roughness of his file,
> Grow, like himself, polite.

Johnson, on this as on many occasions, repented of the blow as soon as it was struck, and sat down by Barnard, "literally smoothing down his arms and knees," and beseeching pardon. Barnard accepted his apologies, but went home and wrote his little copy of verses.

Johnson's shortcomings in civility were no doubt due, in part, to the narrowness of his faculties of perception. He did not know, for he could not see, that his uncouth gestures and slovenly dress were offensive; and he was not so well able to observe others as to shake off the manners contracted in Grub Street. It is hard to study a manual of etiquette late in life, and for a man of Johnson's imperfect faculties it was probably impossible. Errors of this kind were always pardonable, and are now simply ludicrous. But Johnson often shocked his companions by more indefensible conduct. He was irascible, overbearing, and, when angry, vehement beyond all propriety. He was a "tremendous companion," said Garrick's brother; and men of gentle nature, like Charles Fox, often shrank from his company, and perhaps exaggerated his brutality.

Johnson, who had long regarded conversation as the chief amusement, came in later years to regard it as almost

the chief employment of life; and he had studied the art with the zeal of a man pursuing a favourite hobby. He had always, as he told Sir Joshua Reynolds, made it a principle to talk on all occasions as well as he could. He had thus obtained a mastery over his weapons which made him one of the most accomplished of conversational gladiators. He had one advantage which has pretty well disappeared from modern society, and the disappearance of which has been destructive to excellence of talk. A good talker, even more than a good orator, implies a good audience. Modern society is too vast and too restless to give a conversationalist a fair chance. For the formation of real proficiency in the art, friends should meet often, sit long, and be thoroughly at ease. A modern audience generally breaks up before it is well warmed through, and includes enough strangers to break the magic circle of social electricity. The clubs in which Johnson delighted were excellently adapted to foster his peculiar talent. There a man could "fold his legs and have his talk out"—a pleasure hardly to be enjoyed now. And there a set of friends meeting regularly, and meeting to talk, learnt to sharpen each other's skill in all dialectic manœuvres. Conversation may be pleasantest, as Johnson admitted, when two friends meet quietly to exchange their minds without any thought of display. But conversation considered as a game, as a bout of intellectual sword-play, has also charms which Johnson intensely appreciated. His talk was not of the encyclopædia variety, like that of some more modern celebrities; but it was full of apposite illustrations and unrivalled in keen argument, rapid flashes of wit and humour, scornful retort and dexterous sophistry. Sometimes he would fell his adversary at a blow; his sword, as Boswell said, would be through your body in an instant without

preliminary flourishes; and in the excitement of talking for victory, he would use any device that came to hand. "There is no arguing with Johnson," said Goldsmith, quoting a phrase from Cibber, "for if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt-end of it."

Johnson's view of conversation is indicated by his remark about Burke. "That fellow," he said at a time of illness, "calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now, it would kill me." "It is when you come close to a man in conversation," he said on another occasion, "that you discover what his real abilities are. To make a speech in an assembly is a knack. Now I honour Thurlow, sir; Thurlow is a fine fellow, he fairly puts his mind to yours."

Johnson's retorts were fair play under the conditions of the game, as it is fair play to kick an opponent's shins at football. But of course a man who had, as it were, become the acknowledged champion of the ring, and who had an irascible and thoroughly dogmatic temper, [illegible] tempted to become unduly imperious. In the compa[illegible] which Savage was a distinguished member, one may [illegible] that the conversational fervour sometimes degenerated into horse-play. Want of arguments would be supplied by personality, and the champion would avenge himself by brutality on an opponent who happened for once to be getting the best of him. Johnson, as he grew older and got into more polished society, became milder in his manners; but he had enough of the old spirit left in him to break forth at times with ungovernable fury, and astonish the well-regulated minds of respectable ladies and gentlemen.

Anecdotes illustrative of this ferocity abound, and his best friends—except, perhaps, Reynolds and Burke—had all to suffer in turn. On one occasion, when he had made a rude speech even to Reynolds, Boswell states, though with

some hesitation, his belief that Johnson actually blushed. The records of his contests in this kind fill a large space in Boswell's pages. That they did not lead to worse consequences shows his absence of rancour. He was always ready and anxious for a reconciliation, though he would not press for one if his first overtures were rejected. There was no venom in the wounds he inflicted, for there was no ill-nature; he was rough in the heat of the struggle, and in such cases careless in distributing blows; but he never enjoyed giving pain. None of his tiffs ripened into permanent quarrels, and he seems scarcely to have lost a friend. He is a pleasant contrast in this, as in much else, to Horace Walpole, who succeeded, in the course of a long life, in breaking with almost all his old friends. No man set a higher value upon friendship than Johnson. "A man," he said to Reynolds, "ought to keep his friendship in constant repair;" or he would find himself left alone as he grew excelle: "I look upon a day as lost," he said later in life, man cowhich I do not make a new acquaintance." Making ure ha-cquaintances did not involve dropping the old. The list of his friends is a long one, and includes, as it were, successive layers, superposed upon each other, from the earliest period of his life.

This is so marked a feature in Johnson's character, that it will be as well at this point to notice some of the friendships from which he derived the greatest part of his happiness. Two of his schoolfellows, Hector and Taylor, remained his intimates through life. Hector survived to give information to Boswell, and Taylor, then a prebendary of Westminster, read the funeral service over his old friend in the Abbey. He showed, said some of the bystanders, too little feeling. The relation between the two men was not one of special tenderness; indeed they were so little

congenial that Boswell rather gratuitously suspected his venerable teacher of having an eye to Taylor's will. It seems fairer to regard the acquaintance as an illustration of that curious adhesiveness which made Johnson cling to less attractive persons. At any rate, he did not show the complacence of the proper will-hunter. Taylor was rector of Bosworth and squire of Ashbourne. He was a fine specimen of the squire-parson; a justice of the peace, a warm politician, and what was worse, a warm Whig. He raised gigantic bulls, bragged of selling cows for 120 guineas and more, and kept a noble butler in purple clothes and a large white wig. Johnson respected Taylor as a sensible man, but was ready to have a round with him on occasion. He snorted contempt when Taylor talked of breaking some small vessels if he took an emetic. "[illegible]," said the doctor, who regarded a valetudinarian as "[illegible] drel," "if you have so many things that will br[illegible] had better break your neck at once, and there[illegible] on't." Nay, if he did not condemn Taylor's [illegible]olu[illegible] criticized his bulldog with cruel acuteness. "No," [illegible] is not well shaped; for there is not the quick tra[illegible]n from the thickness of the fore-part to the *tenuity*—the thin part—behind, which a bulldog ought to have." On the more serious topic of politics his Jacobite fulminations roused Taylor "to a pitch of bellowing." Johnson roared out that if the people of England were fairly polled (this was in 1777) the present king would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow. Johnson, however, rendered Taylor the substantial service of writing sermons for him, two volumes of which were published after they were both dead; and Taylor must have been a bold man if it be true, as has been said, that he refused to preach a sermon written by Johnson upon Mrs. Johnson's death, on

the ground that it spoke too favourably of the character of the deceased.

Johnson paid frequent visits to Lichfield, to keep up his old friends. One of them was Lucy Porter, his wife's daughter, with whom, according to Miss Seward, he had been in love before he married her mother. He was at least tenderly attached to her through life. And, for the most part, the good people of Lichfield seem to have been proud of their fellow-townsman, and gave him a substantial proof of their sympathy by continuing to him, on favourable terms, the lease of a house originally granted to his father. There was, indeed, one remarkable exception in Miss Seward, who belonged to a genus specially contemptible to the old doctor. She was one of the fine ladies who dabbled in [illegible], and aimed at being the centre of a small literary [illegible] Lichfield. Her letters are amongst the most [illegible] illustrations of the petty affectations and squabbles [illegible]stic of such a provincial clique. She evidently [illegible] Johnson at the bottom of her small soul; and, in[illegible]ough Johnson once paid her a preposterous com[illegible]—a weakness of which this stern moralist was apt to be guilty in the company of ladies—he no doubt trod pretty roughly upon some of her pet vanities.

By far the most celebrated of Johnson's Lichfield friends was David Garrick, in regard to whom his relations were somewhat peculiar. Reynolds said that Johnson considered Garrick to be his own property, and would never allow him to be praised or blamed by any one else without contradiction. Reynolds composed a pair of imaginary dialogues to illustrate the proposition, in one of which Johnson attacks Garrick in answer to Reynolds, and in the other defends him in answer to Gibbon. The dialogues seem to be very good reproductions of the Johnsonian

manner, though perhaps the courteous Reynolds was a little too much impressed by its roughness; and they probably include many genuine remarks of Johnson's. It is remarkable that the praise is far more pointed and elaborate than the blame, which turns chiefly upon the general inferiority of an actor's position. And, in fact, this seems to have corresponded to Johnson's opinion about Garrick as gathered from Boswell.

The two men had at bottom a considerable regard for each other, founded upon old association, mutual services, and reciprocal respect for talents of very different orders. But they were so widely separated by circumstances, as well as by a radical opposition of temperament, that any close intimacy could hardly be expected. The bear and the monkey are not likely to be intimate friends. Garrick's rapid elevation in fame and fortune seems to have produced a certain degree of envy in his old schoolmaster. A grave moral philosopher has, of course, no right to look askance at the rewards which fashion lavishes upon men of lighter and less lasting merit, and which he professes to despise. Johnson, however, was troubled with a rather excessive allowance of human nature. Moreover he had the good old-fashioned contempt for players, characteristic both of the Tory and the inartistic mind. He asserted roundly that he looked upon players as no better than dancing-dogs. "But, sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?" "Yes, sir, as some dogs dance better than others." So when Goldsmith accused Garrick of grossly flattering the queen, Johnson exclaimed, "And as to meanness—how is it mean in a player, a showman, a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling, to flatter his queen?" At another time Boswell suggested that we might respect a great player. "What! sir," exclaimed Johnson, "a

fellow who claps a hump upon his back and a lump on his leg and cries, '*I am Richard III.*'? Nay, sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things: he repeats and he sings; there is both recitation and music in his performance—the player only recites."

Such sentiments were not very likely to remain unknown to Garrick nor to put him at ease with Johnson, whom, indeed, he always suspected of laughing at him. They had a little tiff on account of Johnson's Edition of [illegible]akspeare. From some misunderstanding, Johnson did [illegible]t make use of Garrick's collection of old plays. John[illegible]n, it seems, thought that Garrick should have courted him more, and perhaps sent the plays to his house; whereas Garrick, knowing that Johnson treated books [illegible] roughness *ill-suited to their constitution, thought* [illegible] had done quite enough by asking Johnson to [illegible] his library. The *revenge—if it was revenge—* [illegible]y Johnson was to say nothing of Garrick in his [illegible]e, and to glance obliquely at his non-communication [illegible] rarities. He seems to have thought that it would be [illegible]ering of Shakspeare to admit that his fame owed anything to Garrick's exertions.

Boswell innocently communicated to Garrick a criticism of Johnson's upon one of his poems—

I'd smile with the simple and feed with the poor.

"Let me smile with the wise, and feed with the rich," was Johnson's tolerably harmless remark. Garrick, however, did not like it, and when Boswell tried to console him by saying that Johnson gored everybody in turn, and added, "*fœnum habet in cornu.*" "Ay," said Garrick vehemently, "*he has a whole mow of it.*"

The most unpleasant incident was when Garrick proposed rather too freely to be a member of the Club. Johnson said that the first duke in England had no right to use such language, and said, according to Mrs. Thrale, "If Garrick does apply, I'll blackball him. Surely we ought to be able to sit in a society like ours—

'Unelbowed by a gamester, pimp, or player!'"

Nearly ten years afterwards, however, Johnson fav[illegible] his election, and when he died, declared that the C[illegible] should have a year's widowhood. No successor to Garri[illegible] was elected during that time.

Johnson sometimes ventured to criticise Garrick's acti[illegible] but here Garrick could take his full revenge. Th[illegible] blind Johnson was not, we may imagine, much of [illegible] in such matters. Garrick reports him to have sa[illegible] actor at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity ab[illegible] fellow;" when, in fact, said Garrick, "he was th[illegible] vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards."

In spite of such collisions of opinion and m[illegible] criticism, Johnson seems to have spoken in the highe[illegible] terms of Garrick's good qualities, and they had man[illegible] pleasant meetings. Garrick takes a prominent part in tw[illegible] or three of the best conversations in Boswell, and seem[illegible] to have put his interlocutors in specially good tempe[illegible] Johnson declared him to be "the first man in the world f[illegible] sprightly conversation." He said that Dryden had writt[illegible] much better prologues than any of Garrick's, but th[illegible] Garrick had written more good prologues than Dryden. [illegible] declared that it was wonderful how little Garrick had bee[illegible] spoilt by all the flattery that he had received. No wond[illegible] if he was a little vain: "a man who is perpetually flatter[illegible]

in every mode that can be conceived: so many bellows have blown the fuel, that one wonders he is not by this time become a cinder!" "If all this had happened to me," he said on another occasion, "I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down everybody that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber and Quin, they'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to us," smiling. He admitted at the [illegible] time that Garrick had raised the profession of a [illegible]. He defended Garrick, too, against the common [illegible] of avarice. Garrick, as he pointed out, had been [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]gton made it, and made it, as Garrick grumbled, "as [illegible]ood." But when Garrick became rich he became [illegible] He had, so Johnson declared, given away more [illegible]han any man in England.

[illegible]r Garrick's death, Johnson took occasion to say, in [illegible]*ves of the Poets*, that the death "had eclipsed the [illegible] of nations and diminished the public stock of harm[illegible]ess pleasures." Boswell ventured to criticise the observa[illegible]ion rather spitefully. "Why *nations*? Did his gaiety [illegible]xtend further than his own nation?" "Why, sir," replied [illegible]ohnson, "some exaggeration must be allowed. Besides, [illegible]e may say *nations* if we allow the Scotch to be a nation, [illegible]nd to have gaiety—which they have not." On the whole, [illegible] spite of various drawbacks, Johnson's reported observa[illegible]ons upon Garrick will appear to be discriminative, and [illegible]et, on the whole, strongly favourable to his character [illegible]et we are not quite surprised that Mrs. Garrick did not [illegible]spond to a hint thrown out by Johnson, that he would [illegible] glad to write the life of his friend.

At Oxford, Johnson acquired the friendship of Dr. Adams, afterwards Master of Pembroke and author of a once well-known reply to Hume's argument upon miracles. He was an amiable man, and was proud to do the honours of the university to his old friend, when, in later years, Johnson revisited the much-loved scenes of his neglected youth. The warmth of Johnson's regard for old days is oddly illustrated by an interview recorded by Boswell with [illegible] fact more surprising then than now. Boswell eag[illegible] gathered up the little scraps of college anecdote which the meeting produced, but perhaps his best find was a phrase of Edwards himself. "You are a philosopher, Dr. [illegible]son," he said; "I have tried, too, in my time [illegible] philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerful[illegible] always breaking in." The phrase, as Boswell tr[illegible] records an exquisite trait of character.

Of the friends who gathered round Johnson dur[illegible] period of struggle, many had vanished before he be[illegible] well known. The best loved of all seems to have been Dr. Bathurst, a physician, who, failing to obtain practice, joined the expedition to Havannah, and fell a victim to the climate (1762). Upon him Johnson pronounced a panegyric which has contributed a proverbial phrase to the language. "Dear Bathurst," he said, "was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig; he was a very good hater." Johnson remembered Bathurst in his prayers for years after his loss, and received from him a peculiar legacy. Francis Barber had been the negro slave of Bathurst's father, who left him his liberty by will. Dr. Bathurst allowed him to enter

Johnson's service; and Johnson sent him to school at considerable expense, and afterwards retained him in his service with little interruption till his own death. Once Barber ran away to sea, and was discharged, oddly enough, by the good offices of Wilkes, to whom Smollett applied on Johnson's behalf. Barber became an important member of Johnson's family, some of whom reproached him for his liberality to the nigger. No one ever solved the great [illegible]em as to what services were rendered by Barber to [illegible]ster, whose wig was "as impenetrable by a comb as the [illegible]kset hedge," and whose clothes were never touched [illegible] the brush.

Among the other friends of this period must be re[illegible]oned his biographer, Hawkins, an attorney who was [illegible]ds Chairman of the Middlesex Justices, and [illegible] on presenting an address to the King. *Boswell* [illegible] poor Sir John Hawkins with all the animosity of [illegible]uthor, and with some spice of wounded vanity. [illegible] grievously offended, so at least says Sir John's [illegible]er, on being described in the *Life of Johnson* as [illegible] James Boswell" without a solitary epithet such as celebrated or well-known. If that was really his feelings he had his revenge; for no one book ever so suppressed another as Boswell's Life suppressed Hawkins's. In truth, Hawkins was a solemn prig, remarkable chiefly for the unusual intensity of his conviction that all virtue consists in respectability. He had a special aversion to "goodness of heart," which he regarded as another name for a quality properly called extravagance or vice. Johnson's tenacity of old acquaintance introduced him into the Club, where he made himself so disagreeable, especially, as it seems, by rudeness to Burke, that he found it expedient to invent a pretext for resignation. Johnson called him a "very un-

clubable man," and may perhaps have intended him in the quaint description: "I really believe him to be an honest man at the bottom; though, to be sure, he is rather [illegible]urious, and he is somewhat mean; and it must be owned [illegible] some degree of brutality, and is not without a ten-[illegible] savageness that cannot well be defended."

[illegible] list of Johnson's friends it is proper to men-[illegible]chardson and Hawkesworth. Richardson see[illegible] to have given him substantial help, and was rep[illegible] favourable comparisons with Fielding, scarcely bo[illegible] by the verdict of posterity. "Fielding," said Jo[illegible] "could tell the hour by looking at the clock; [illegible] Richardson knew how the clock was made." "There is more knowledge of the heart," he said at another time, "in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom* [illegible] Johnson's preference of the sentimentalist to the m[illegible] humour and strong sense were so like his own, sh[illegible] much his criticism was biassed by his prejudices; [illegible] of course, Richardson's external decency was a rec[illegible] dation to the moralist. Hawkesworth's intimac[illegible] Johnson seems to have been chiefly in the period be[illegible] the *Dictionary* and the pension. He was considered to be Johnson's best imitator; and has vanished like other imitators. His fate, if the very doubtful story believed at the time be true, was a curious one for a friend of Johnson's. He had made some sceptical remarks as to the efficacy of prayer in his preface to the South Sea Voyages; and was so bitterly attacked by a "Christian" in the papers, that he destroyed himself by a dose of opium.

Two younger friends, who became disciples of the sage soon after the appearance of the *Rambler*, are prominent figures in the later circle. One of these was Bennet Langton, a man of good family, fine scholarship, and very

amiable character. His exceedingly tall and slender figure was compared by Best to the stork in Raphael's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. Miss Hawkins describes him sitting with one leg twisted round the other as tho[illegible], to occupy the smallest possible space, and playing w[illegible]plied gold snuff-box with a mild countenance and swee[illegible]member The gentle, modest creature was loved by Johns[illegible] for his [illegible]ld warm into unusual eloquence in singing his [illegible]great T[illegible]ctor, however, was rather fond of discussing with [illegible] the faults of his friend. They seem to have chiefly the[illegible]d in a certain languor or sluggishness of tempera[illegible] which allowed his affairs to get into perplexity. Once, w[illegible] *arguing the delicate question as to the propriety* of tel[illegible]g a friend of his wife's unfaithfulness, Boswell, after [illegible] fashion, chose to enliven the abstract statement [illegible]d to R[illegible] [illegible]rely imaginary hypothesis of Mr. and Mrs. Lang-po[illegible] *in this position. Johnson said that it would* [illegible] to tell Langton, because he would be too sluggish [illegible] a divorce. Once Langton was the unconscious [illegible] one of Johnson's oddest performances. Langton [illegible]ployed Chambers, a common friend *of his* and Johnson's, to draw his will. Johnson, talking to Chambers and Boswell, was suddenly struck by the absurdity of his friend's appearing in the character of testator. His companions, however, were utterly unable to see in what the joke consisted; but Johnson laughed obstreperously and irrepressibly: he laughed till he reached the Temple Gate; and when in Fleet Street went almost into convulsions of *hilarity. Holding on by one of the posts in the* street, he sent forth such peals of laughter that they seemed in the silence of the night to resound from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch.

Not long before his death, Johnson applied to Langton

for spiritual advice. "I desired him to tell me sincerely in what he thought my life was faulty." Langton wrote upon a sheet of paper certain texts recommending Christian [illegible]rity; and explained, upon inquiry, that he was pointing [illegible]son's habit of contradiction. The old doctor began [illegible]king him earnestly for his kindness; but gradually [illegible] "in a loud and ang[illegible] [illegible] complained of the [illegible] [illegible]ense that he ha[illegible] unjustly treated. It was a scene for a comedy, [illegible] nolds observed, to see a penitent get into a pas[illegible] belabour his confessor.

Through Langton, Johnson became acquainted wit[illegible] friend whose manner was in the strongest contrast t[illegible] his own. Topham Beauclerk was a man of fashion, [illegible] commended to Johnson by a likeness to Charles [illegible] whom he was descended, being the grandson o[illegible] Duke of St. Alban's. Beauclerk was a man of li[illegible] scientific tastes. He inherited some of the mor[illegible] which Johnson chose to pardon in his ancestor[illegible] years after his acquaintance with Boswell he marri[illegible] Diana Spencer, a lady who had been divorced upon his account from her husband, Lord Bolingbroke. But he took care not to obtrude his faults of life, whatever they may have been, upon the old moralist, who entertained for him a peculiar affection. He specially admired Beauclerk's skill in the use of a more polished, if less vigorous style of conversation than his own. He envied the eas[e] with which Beauclerk brought out his sly incisive retort[s]. "No man," he said, "ever was so free when he was going to say a good thing, from a look that expressed that it was coming; or, when he had said it, from a look that expressed that it had come." When Beauclerk was dying

(in 1780), Johnson said, with a faltering voice, that he would walk to the extremity of the diameter of the earth to save him. Two little anecdotes are expressive of his tender feeling for this incongruous friend. Boswell [illegible] asked him to sup at Beauclerk's. He started, but [illegible]plied way, recollecting himself, said, "I cannot go; b[illegible]member [illegible] *love Beauclerk the less.*" Beauclerk had pu[illegible] for his [illegible] of Johnson the inscription,— [illegible]

Ingenium ingens
Inculto latet hoc sub corpore.

[illegible] who bought the portrait, had the inscription [illegible]ved. "It was kind in you to take it off," said Jo[illegible]son; and, after a short pause, "not unkind in him to [illegible]"

[illegible]d to Re[illegible] their acquaintance, the two young men, Beau [illegible] as Johnson called them, had sat up one night [illegible] till three in the morning. The courageous [illegible] struck them that they would knock up the old [illegible]her. He came to the door of his chambers, poker [illegible] with an old wig for a nightcap. On hearing their errand, the sage exclaimed, "What! is it you, you dogs! I'll have a frisk with you." And so Johnson with the two youths, his juniors by about thirty years, proceeded to make a night of it. They amazed the fruiterers in Covent Garden; they brewed a bowl of bishop in a tavern, while Johnson quoted the poet's address to Sleep,—

"Short, O short, be then thy reign,
And give us to the world again!"

They took a boat to Billingsgate, and Johnson, with Beauclerk, kept up their amusement for the following day, when Langton deserted them to go to breakfast with some

young ladies, and Johnson scolded him for leaving his friends "to go and sit with a parcel of wretched unidea'd girls." "I shall have my old friend to bail out of the [illegible] house," said Garrick when he heard of this queer [illegible]; and he told Johnson that he would be in the [illegible] for his frolic. "He *durst* not do such a thing. [illegible] would not let him," was the moralist's retort. [illegible] friends, known to fame by other titles than [illegible] nexion with Johnson, had by this time gathered [illegible] them. Among them was one, whose art he wi[illegible] to appreciate, but whose fine social qualities and [illegible] equability of temper made him a valued and [illegible] companion. Reynolds had settled in London at th[illegible] of 1752. Johnson met him at the house of Miss Cotterell. Reynolds had specially admired Johnson's *Life of* [illegible], and, on their first meeting, happened to mak[illegible] which delighted Johnson. The ladies were reg[illegible] loss of a friend to whom they were under o[illegible] "You have, however," said Reynolds, "the c[illegible] being relieved from a burden of gratitude." The [illegible] a little too much like Rochefoucauld, and too tr[illegible] pleasant; but it was one of those keen remarks which Johnson appreciated because they prick a bubble of commonplace moralizing without demanding too literal an acceptation. He went home to sup with Reynolds and became his intimate friend. On another occasion, Johnson was offended by two ladies of rank at the same house, and by way of taking down their pride, asked Reynolds in a loud voice, "How much do you think you and I could get in a week, if we both worked as hard as we could?" "His appearance," says Sir Joshua's sister, Miss Reynolds, "might suggest the poor author: as he was not likely in that place to be a blacksmith or a porter." Poor Miss

Reynolds, who tells this story, was another attraction to Reynolds' house. She was a shy, retiring maiden lady, who vexed her famous brother by following in his steps without his talents, and was deeply hurt by his annoy[illegible] at the unintentional mockery. Johnson was thro[illegible]pplied a kind and judicious friend to her; and had [illegible]member [illegible]n their first meeting by a significant indicati[illegible] for his [illegible]r. He said that when going home to his lod[illegible]reat [illegible] two in the morning, he often saw poor childr[illegible] [illegible] thresholds and stalls—the wretched "street [illegible]f the day—and that he used to put pennies into [illegible]nds that they might buy a breakfast.

[illegible]o friends, who deserve to be placed beside Reynolds, cam[illegible] from Ireland to seek their fortunes in London. [illegible] Burke, incomparably the greatest writer upon [illegible]ilosophy in English literature, the master of a [illegible]alled for richness, flexibility, and vigour, was [illegible]pposed to Johnson on party questions, though [illegible]age upon the French Revolution, after Johnson's [illegible]uld have satisfied even the strongest prejudices of [illegible]ld friend. But he had qualities which commended him even to the man who called him a "bottomless Whig," and who generally spoke of Whigs as rascals, and maintained that the first Whig was the devil. If his intellect was wider, his heart was as warm as Johnson's, and in conversation he merited the generous applause and warm emulation of his friend. Johnson was never tired of praising the extraordinary readiness and spontaneity of Burke's conversation. "If a man," he said, "went under a shed at the same time with Burke to avoid a shower, he would say, 'This is an extraordinary man.' Or if Burke went into a stable to see his horse dressed, the ostler would say, 'We have had an extraordinary man here.'"

When Burke was first going into Parliament, Johnson said in answer to Hawkins, who wondered that such a man should get a seat, "We who know Mr. Burke, know that [illegible] will be one of the first men in the country." Speaking [illegible] in other members of Parliament, more after the [illegible] Sir John Hawkins, he said that he grudged success [illegible] who made a figure by a knowledge of a [illegible] [illegible] though his mind was "[illegible] [illegible] ar cruet;" but that he di[illegible] the first man in the House of [illegible] the first man everywhere. And Burke equally [illegible] Johnson's supremacy in conversation. "It is en[illegible] me," he said to some one who regretted Johnson's mo[illegible] of the talk on a particular occasion, "to have rung the bell for him."

The other Irish adventurer, whose career [illegible] him [illegible] nearly moulded upon that of Johnson, came to [illegible] 1756, and made Johnson's acquaintance some [illegible] wards (in or before 1761). Goldsmith, like [illegible] had tasted the bitterness of an usher's life, and [illegible] into the scarcely more tolerable regions of Gru[illegible]. After some years of trial, he was becoming known to the booksellers as a serviceable hand, and had two works in his desk destined to lasting celebrity. His landlady (apparently 1764) one day arrested him for debt. Johnson, summoned to his assistance, sent him a guinea and speedily followed. The guinea had already been changed, and Goldsmith was consoling himself with a bottle of Madeira. Johnson corked the bottle, and a discussion of ways and means brought out the manuscript of the *Vicar of Wakefield*. Johnson looked into it, took it to a bookseller, got sixty pounds for it, and returned to Goldsmith, who paid his rent and administered a sound rating to his landlady.

The relation thus indicated is characteristic; Johnson was as a rough but helpful elder brother to poor Goldsmith, gave him advice, sympathy, and applause, and at times criticised him pretty sharply, or brought down [illegible] conversational bludgeon upon his sensitive friend. [illegible]pplied has nothing of the bear but his skin," was Go[illegible]member [illegible]ment upon his clumsy friend, and the two m[illegible]n for his [illegible] each other at bottom. Some of their read[illegible] great [illegible]ed to resent Johnson's attitude of superio[illegible] [illegible]rably pure and tender heart, and the exquisite [illegible]al refinement implied in the *Vicar* and the [illegible], force us to love Goldsmith in spite of super[illegible] foibles, and when Johnson prunes or interpolates lin[illegible] in the *Traveller*, we feel as though a woodman's axe [illegible]cking at a most delicate piece of carving. The [illegible]d to Re[illegible] of contemporary observers, however, must force [illegible] readers to admit that poor Goldsmith's foibles [illegible] however amply compensated by rare and admi[illegible]lities. Garrick's assertion, that he "wrote like [illegible] but talked like poor Poll," expresses the unani[illegible]pinion of all who had actually seen him. Undoubtedly some of the stories of his childlike vanity, his frankly expressed envy, and his general capacity for blundering, owe something to Boswell's feeling that he was a rival near the throne, and sometimes poor Goldsmith's humorous self-assertion may have been taken too seriously by blunt English wits. One may doubt, for example, whether he was really jealous of a puppet tossing a pike, and unconscious of his absurdity in saying "Pshaw! I could do it better myself!" Boswell, however, was too good an observer to misrepresent at random, and he has, in fact, explained very well the true meaning of his remarks. Goldsmith was an excitable Irishman of genius.

who tumbled out whatever came uppermost, and [illegible] the feelings of the moment with utter want of reserve. His self-controlled companions wondered, ridiculed, misinterpreted, and made fewer hits as well as fewer misses.

I[illegible]iety to "get in and share," made him, according [illegible]on, an "unsocial" companion. Goldsmith, [illegible] of [illegible]ot temper enough for the game he played. [illegible] much. A man might always get a fall [illegible] [illegible]erior in the chances of talk, and Goldsmith [illegible] [illegible]s too keenly. He had certainly some trials [illegible] in Johnson's company. "Stay, stay," said a [illegible] *stopping him in the full flow of his eloquence,* [illegible] Johnson is going to say something." An Eton [illegible] called Graham, who was supping with the two doctors, and had got to the pitch of looking at one person and talking to another, said, "Doctor, I shall be gl[illegible] *you* at Eton." "I shall be glad to wait on [illegible] Goldsmith. "No," replied Graham, "'tis not yo[illegible] Doctor Minor; 'tis Doctor Major there." Po[illegible] smith said afterwards, "Graham is a fellow to m[illegible] commit *suicide.*" [illegible] of the

Boswell who attributes some of Goldsmith's sayings about Johnson to envy, said with probable truth that Goldsmith had not more envy than others, but only spoke of it more freely. Johnson argued that we must be angry with a man who had so much of an odious quality that he could not keep it to himself, but let it "boil over." The feeling, at any rate, was momentary and totally free from malice; and Goldsmith's criticisms upon Johnson and his idolators seem to have been fair enough. His objection to Boswell's substituting a monarchy for a republic has already been mentioned. At another time he checked Boswell's flow of panegyric by asking, "Is he like Burke,

The [illegible]inds into a subject like a serpent!" To which [illegible]swell replied with charming irrelevance, "Johnson is the Hercules who strangled serpents in his cradle." The last of Goldsmith's hits was suggested by Johnson, shaking his sides with laughter because Goldsmith [illegible]plied [illegible] skill with which the little fishes in the fable [illegible]ember [illegible]lk in character. "Why, Dr. Johnson, thi[illegible] for his [illegible] you seem to think," was the retort, "for i[illegible]reat [illegible]little fishes talk, they would talk like whal[illegible] [illegible] of sundry little sparrings, Johnson fully app[illegible] [illegible]dsmith's genius. Possibly his authority hastene[illegible] [illegible]d of public appreciation, as he seemed to clai[illegible] [illegible] for repudiating Boswell's too flattering theory tha[illegible] it [illegible]id materially raised Goldsmith's position. Whe[illegible] Re[illegible]ds quoted the authority of Fox in favour of the [illegible] saying that his friends might suspect that they [illegible] too partial, Johnson replied very truly that the [illegible] was beyond the need of Fox's praise, and that [illegible]ality of Goldsmith's friends had always been [illegible] him. They would hardly give him a hearing. [illegible]mith," he added, "was a man who, whatever he wrote, always did it better than any other man could do." Johnson's settled opinion in fact was that embodied in the famous epitaph with its "nihil tetigit quod non ornavit," and, though dedications are perhaps the only literary product more generally insincere than epitaphs, we may believe that Goldsmith too meant what he said in the dedication of *She Stoops to Conquer*. "It may do me some honour to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety."

Though Johnson was thus rich in friendship, two [illegible] nexions have still to be noticed which had an exceptional bearing upon his fame and happiness. In January, 1765, [illegible]de the acquaintance of the Thrales. Mr. Thrale [illegible] proprietor of the brewery which afterwards [illegible] of Barclay and Perkins. He was married [illegible] Miss Hester Lynch Salisbury, who has be[illegible] from her friendship with Johnson.[1] S[illegible] [illegible]n of great vivacity and independence of ch[illegible] [illegible] a sensitive and passionate, if not a very [illegible]

[illegible]

English scholarship than fell to the lot of most ladies of her day, and wit enough to preserve her from degen[illegible] like some of the "blues," into that most offen[illegible] beings—a feminine prig. Her marriage had been [illegible] convenience, and her husband's want of sympath[illegible] jealousy of any interference in business matters, [illegible] her, she says, to take to literature as her sole res[illegible] "No wonder," she adds, "if I loved my books [illegible] children." It is, perhaps, more to be wondered at that her children seem to have had a rather subordinate place in her affections. The marriage, however, though not of the happiest, was perfectly decorous. Mrs. Thrale discharged her domestic duties irreproachably, even when she seems to have had some real cause of complaint. To the world she eclipsed her husband, a solid respectable man, whose mind, according to Johnson, struck the hours very regularly, though it did not mark the minutes.

[1] Mrs. Thrale was born in 1740 or 1741, probably the latter. Thrale was born in 1724.

The Thrales were introduced to Johnson by their common friend, Arthur Murphy, an actor and dramatist, who afterwards became the editor of Johnson's works. One day, when calling upon Johnson, they found him in such a fit of despair that Thrale tried to stop his mouth by placing his hand before it. The pair then begged Johnson to leave his solitary abode, and come to them at their country-house at Streatham. He did so, and for the next sixteen years a room was set apart for him both at Streatham and in their house in Southwark. He passed a large part of his time with them, and derived from the intimacy most of the comfort of his later years. He treated Mrs. Thrale with a kind of paternal gallantry, her age at the time of their acquaintance being about twenty-four, and his fifty-five. He generally called her by the playful name of "my mistress," addressed little poems to her, gave her solid advice, and gradually came to confide to her his miseries and ailments with rather surprising openness. She flattered and amused him, and soothed his sufferings and did something towards humanizing his rugged exterior. There was one little grievance between them which requires notice. Johnson's pet virtue in private life was a rigid regard for truth. He spoke, it was said of him, as if he was always on oath. He would not, for example, allow his servant to use the phrase "not at home," and even in the heat of conversation resisted the temptation to give point to an anecdote. The lively Mrs. Thrale rather fretted against the restraint, and Johnson admonished her in vain. He complained to Boswell that she was willing to have that said of her, which the best of mankind had died rather than have said of them. Boswell, the faithful imitator of his master in this respect, delighted in taking up the parable. "Now, madam, give

me leave to catch you in the fact," he said ... the occasion; "it was not an old woman, but an old man ... I mentioned, as having told me this," and he recoun... back to the "lively lady" with intense complacency.

It ... imagined, Boswell and Mrs. Thrale did not ...

some English friends at the Scotch university, ... whom must be mentioned Mr. Temple, an English... man. Boswell's correspondence with Temple, disc... years after his death by a singular chance, and published in 1857, is, after the Life of Johnson, one of the ...st curious exhibitions of character in the language. ... was intended for the Scotch bar, and studied ci... Utrecht in the winter of 1762. It was in the ... summer that he made Johnson's acquaintance. ... He

Perhaps the fundamental quality in Boswell's c... was his intense capacity for enjoyment. He was, ... Carlyle puts it, "gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character." His love of good living and good drink would have made him a hearty admirer of his countryman, Burns, had Burns been famous in Boswell's youth. Nobody could have joined with more thorough abandonment in the chorus to the poet's liveliest songs in praise of love and wine. He would have made an excellent fourth when "Willie brewed a peck of maut, and Rab and Allan cam to pree," and the drinking contest for the Whistle commemorated in another lyric would have excited his keenest interest. He was always delighted when he could get

The in[illegible] discuss the ethics and statistics of drinking was wel[illegible] myself," he says, "a lover of wine, and therefor[illegible] [illegible]is to hear whatever is remarkable concerning drink[illegible] The remark is *à propos* to a story of Dr. Campb[illegible] [illegible]ing thirteen bottles of port at a sitting. [illegible]plied [illegible]

[illegible]sing frankness the vicissitudes of some of his [illegible] and the versatility of his passions.

[illegible]well's tastes, however, were by no means limited to sensual or frivolous enjoyments. His appreciation of the bottle was combined with an equally hearty sensibility to [illegible]llectual pleasures. He had not a spark of philo[illegible] poetic power, but within the ordinary range of [illegible]es as can be discussed at a dinner-party, he had an [illegible]nt share of liveliness and intelligence. His palate [illegible]een for good talk as for good wine. He was an [illegible]le recipient, if not an originator, of shrewd or humorous remarks upon life and manners. What in regard to sensual enjoyment was mere gluttony, appeared in higher matters as an insatiable curiosity. At times this faculty became intolerable to his neighbours. "I will not be baited with what and why," said poor Johnson, one day in desperation. "Why is a cow's tail long? Why is a fox's tail bushy?" "Sir," said Johnson on another occasion, when Boswell was cross-examining a third person about him in his presence. "You have but two subjects, yourself and me. I am sick of both." Boswell, however, was not to be repelled by such a retort as this, or even by ruder rebuffs. Once when dis-

cussing the means of getting a friend to leave [illegible] Johnson said in revenge for a previous offence. [illegible] sir, we'll send you to him. If your presence doesn't [illegible] out of his house, nothing will." Boswell [illegible] shocked," but he still stuck to his victim [illegible]

[illegible]

orange-peel. His curiosity was not satisfied on this occasion; but it would have made him the prince of interviewers in these days. Nothing delighted him so much as rubbing shoulders with any famous or notori[illegible] person. He scraped acquaintance with Voltaire, [illegible] Rousseau, and Paoli, as well as with Mrs. Rudd, [illegible] gotten heroine of the *Newgate Calendar*. He [illegible] eager to talk to Hume the sceptic, or Wilkes the [illegible] gogue, as to the orthodox Tory, Johnson; and, if repelled, it was from no deficiency in daring. In 1767, he took advantage of his travels in Corsica to introduce himself to Lord Chatham, then Prime Minister. The letter modestly ends by asking, "*Could your lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter?* I have been told how favourably your lordship has spoken of me. To correspond with a Paoli and with a Chatham is enough to keep a young man ever ardent in the pursuit of virtuous fame." No other young man of the day, we may be sure, would have dared to make such a proposal to the majestic orator.

His absurd vanity, and the greedy craving for notorie[ty]

The in[illegible]ost, would have made Boswell the most offensive [illegible]rtals, had not his unfeigned good-humour disarmed [illegible]ty. Nobody could help laughing, or be inclined to [illegible]ffence at his harmless absurdities. Burke [illegible] that he had so much good-humour natural[illegible]plied [illegible] scarcely a virtue. His vanity, in fa[illegible]mber [illegible] affectation. Most vain men are vain [illegible]or his [illegible]ey do not really possess, or possess in [illegible]at [illegible]an they fancy. They are always acting [illegible] [illegible]me touchy from a half-conscious sense o[illegible] [illegible]e. But Boswell seems to have had few such [illegible]s. He thoroughly and unfeignedly enjoyed his own peculiarities, and thought his real self much too charming an object to be in need of any disguise. No man, therefore, was ever less embarrassed by any regard for his own dignity. He was as ready to join in a laugh at him[illegible]f as in a laugh at his neighbours. He reveals his own [illegible]rdities to the world at large as frankly as Pepys con[illegible] them to a journal in cypher. He tells us how [illegible] he got one night in Skye, and how he cured his headache with brandy next morning; and what an intolerable fool he made of himself at an evening party in London after a dinner with the Duke of Montrose, and how Johnson in vain did his best to keep him quiet. His motive for the concession is partly the wish to illustrate Johnson's indulgence, and, in the last case, to introduce a copy of apologetic verses to the lady whose guest he had been. He reveals other weaknesses with equal frankness. One day, he says, "I owned to Johnson that I was occasionally troubled with a fit of narrowness." "Why, sir," said he, "so am I. *But I do not tell it.*" Boswell enjoys the joke far too heartily to act upon the advice.

There is nothing, however, which Boswell seems to have

enjoyed more heartily than his own good im...
looks upon his virtuous resolutior
satisfaction, and with the glow of
...ing a promising penitent.
... consequences of impru...
...rtuous advice from his
...s himsel...

undone those thin...
attended," as he elsewhere sagely observes, "with ... less of what is truly remorse;" but he seems rather to have enjoyed even the remorse. It is needless to say that the complacency was its own reward, and that the resolution vanished like other more eccentric impulses. Music, he once told Johnson, affected him intensely, producing in his mind "alternate sensations of pathetic dejection so that I was ready to shed tears, and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest of the [purely hypothetical] battle." "Sir," replied Johnson, "I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool." Elsewhere he expresses a wish to "fly to the woods," or retire into a desert, a disposition which Johnson checked by one of his habitual gibes at the quantity of easily accessible desert in Scotland. Boswell is equally frank in describing himself in situations more provocative of contempt than even drunkenness in a drawing-room. He tells us how dreadfully frightened he was by a storm at sea in the Hebrides, and how one of his companions, "with a happy readiness," made him lay hold of a rope fastened to the masthead, and told him to pull it when he wa...

The in[illegible] Boswell was thus kept quiet in mind and harm-[illegible]body.

[illegible] His extreme simplicity of character makes poor Boswell [illegible]ble in his way. If he sought notoriety, he did not [illegible] [illegible]te his powers as to set up for independent [illegible]plied [illegible] was content to shine in reflected light [illegible]mber [illegible] tions with which he is charged seem to [illegible]r his [illegible]ous imitations of his great idol. M[illegible]at [illegible] me likeness even in his dress. In the la[illegible]

[illegible] Boswell exclaims, "Alas, sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be as hard bound by chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears." But he specially emulates the profound melancholy of his hero.[1] He seems to have taken pride in his sufferings from hypochondria; though, in truth, his melancholy diverges from [illegible]hnson's by as great a difference as that which divides [illegible] two varieties in Jaques's classification. Boswell's was the melancholy of a man who spends too much, drinks too much, falls in love too often, and is forced to live in the country in dependence upon a stern old parent, when he is longing for a jovial life in London taverns. Still he was excusably vexed when Johnson refused to believe in the reality of his complaints, and showed scant sympathy to his noisy would-be fellow-sufferer. Some of Boswell's freaks

[1] The story is often told how Boswell appeared at the Stratford Jubilee with "Corsica Boswell" in large letters on his hat. The account given apparently by himself is sufficiently amusing, but the statement is not quite fair. Boswell not unnaturally appeared at a masquerade in the dress of a Corsican chief, and the inscription on his hat seems to have been "Viva la Libertà."

were, in fact, very trying. Once he gave up wri[illegible] for a long time, to see whether Johnson would be [illegible] to write first. Johnson became anxious, though he [illegible] the truth, and in reference to Boswell's con[illegible] [illegible] disciple a piece of his mind. "Rememb[illegible] [illegible] either knavish or childish, and that [illegible] of [illegible]

[illegible]

man, and I am very good now. I fear God and ho[illegible] the king; I wish to do no ill and to be benevolent to all mankind." Boswell hopes, "for the felicity of human nature," that many experience this mood; though Johnson judiciously suggested that he should not trust too much to impressions. In some matters Boswell showed a touch of independence by outvying the Johnsonian prejudices. He was a warm admirer of feudal principles, and especially held to the propriety of entailing property upon heirs male. Johnson had great difficulty in persuading him to yield to his father's wishes, in a settlement of the estate which contravened this theory. But Boswell takes care to declare that his opinion was not shaken. "Yet let me not be thought," he adds, "harsh or unkind to daughters; for my notion is that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family." His estimate of female rights is indicated in another phrase. When Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker, expressed a hope that the sexes would be equal in another world, Boswell replied, "That is too ambitious, madam. *We* might as well desire to be equal with the angels."

The [illegible] gain, differed from Johnson—who, in spite of his [illegible] authority, had a righteous hatred for all recognized [illegible]ny—by advocating the slave-trade. To abolish that [illegible] would, he says, be robbery of the masters and [illegible] African savages. Nay, he declares, to [illegible]pplied [illegible] be [illegible] member

To shut the gates of mercy on mankind

[illegible] for his [illegible] great [illegible] all was, according to Johnson, "the best [illegible] [illegible] in the world." In fact, for such purp[illegible] good-humour and readiness to make talk [illegible] are high recommendations. "If, sir, you were [illegible] up in a castle and a new-born baby with you, what would you do?" is one of his questions to Johnson,—*à propos* of nothing. That is exquisitely ludicrous, no doubt; but a man capable of preferring such a remark to silence helps at any rate to keep the ball rolling. A more objectionable trick was his habit not only of asking preposterous or indiscreet questions, but of setting people by [illegible] ce of so queer [illegible] son's friends. [illegible]" asked some one. "He is not a cur," replied Goldsmith; "he is only a bur. Tom Davies flung him at Johnson in sport, and he has the faculty of sticking." The bur stuck till the end of Johnson's life. Boswell visited London whenever he could, and soon began taking careful notes of Johnson's talk. His appearance, when engaged in this task long afterwards, is described by Miss Burney. Boswell, she says, concentrated his whole attention upon his idol, not even answering questions from others. When Johnson spoke, his eyes goggled with eagerness; he leant his ear almost on the Doctor's shoulder; his mouth dropped open

to catch every syllable; and he seemed to listen [illegible] Johnson's breathings as though they had some [illegible] significance. He took every opportunity of edging [illegible] to Johnson's side even at meal-times, a[illegible] ordered imperiously back to his place [illegible] over-obtrusive spaniel.

It [illegible]ardly surprising that Johnson shoul[illegible] [illegible]ned by the fidelity of this queer follow[illegible] [illegible]modestly enough, attributes Johnson's easy [illegible] interest in all manifestations of the hum[illegible] and his pleasure in an undisguised display of its [illegible] The last pleasure was certainly to be obtained in B[illegible] society. But in fact Boswell, though his qualities [illegible] too much those of the ordinary "good fellow," was not without virtues, and still less without remarkable talents. He was, to all appearance, a man of really generous sympathies, and capable of appreciating proofs of a warm heart and a vigorous understanding. Foolish, vain, and absurd in every way, he was yet a far kindlier and more genuine man than many who laughed at him. His singular gifts as an observer could only escape notice from a careless or inexperienced reader. Boswell has a little of the true Shaksperian secret. He lets his characters show themselves without obtruding unnecessary comment. He never misses the point of a story, though he does not ostentatiously call our attention to it. He gives just what is wanted to indicate character, or to explain the full meaning of a repartee. It is not till we compare his reports with those of less skilful hearers, that we can appreciate the skill with which the essence of a conversation is extracted, and the whole scene indicated by a few telling touches. We are tempted to fancy that we have heard the very thing, and rashly infer that Boswell was simply the mechanical trans-

The [illegible] good things uttered. Any one who will try to [illegible]wn the pith of a brilliant conversation within the [illegible] pace, may soon satisfy himself of the absurdity of such [illegible]othesis, and will learn to appreciate Boswell's [illegible]

On [illegible] of memory but artistic representation [illegible]pplied [illegible] plies not only admirable quickness of [illegible] member [illegible] re literary faculty. Boswell's accurac[illegible]n for his [illegible] great

[illegible]

[illegible]graphy; that which sets forth a condensed and [illegible]rous statement of the essentials of a man's life and character. Other biographers had given excellent memoirs of men considered in relation to the chief historical currents of the time. But a full-length portrait of a man's domestic life with enough picturesque detail to enable us to see him through the eyes of private friendship did not exist in the language. Boswell's originality and merit may be tested by comparing his book to the ponderous performance of Sir John Hawkins, or to the dreary dissertations, falsely called lives, of which Dugald Stewart's *Life of Robertson* may be taken for a type. The writer is so anxious to be dignified and philosophical that the despairing reader seeks in vain for a single vivid touch, and discovers even the main facts of the hero's life by some indirect allusion. Boswell's example has been more or less followed by innumerable successors; and we owe it in some degree to his example that we have such delightful books as Lockhart's *Life of Scott* or Mr. Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*. Yet no later biographer has been quite as fortunate in a subject; and Boswell remains as not only the first, but the best of his class.

The [illegible]graphers who have followed Boswell's steps, [illegible] most conclusive proof that Boswell was a man [illegible] higher intellectual capacity than has been generally [illegible]d.

[illegible]

The[illegible] admirers. His abandonment of wine seems [illegible]proved his health and diminished the intensity [illegible]melancholy fits. His literary activity, however, [illegible]eased. He wrote a few political pamph[illegible], [illegible] Government, and after a long period of [illegible]pplied [illegible] to complete his last conspicuous work[illegible]member [illegible]ets, which was published in 1779 and [illegible] for his [illegible]k of some interest appeared in 1775. [illegible]great [illegible]f the journey made with Boswell to the H[illegible]h [illegible] This journey was in fact the chief inter[illegible] [illegible]en tenour of his life. He made a tour to [illegible] Thrales in 1774; and spent a month with th[illegible] [illegible]ris in 1775. For the rest of the period he liv[illegible] chiefly in London or at Streatham, making occasional trips to Lichfield and Oxford, or paying visits to Taylor, Langton, and one or two other friends. It was, however, in the London which he loved so ardently ("a man," he said once, "who is tired of London is tired of life"), that he was chiefly conspicuous. There he talked and drank tea illimitably at his friends' houses, or argued and laid down the law to his disciples collected in a tavern instead of Academic groves. Especially he was in all his glory at the Club, which began its meetings in February, 1764, and was afterwards known as the Literary Club. This Club was founded by Sir Joshua Reynolds, "our Romulus," as Johnson called him. The original members were Reynolds, Johnson, Burke, Nugent, Beauclerk, Langton, Goldsmith, Chamier, and Hawkins. They met weekly at the Turk's Head, in Gerard Street, Soho, at seven o'clock, and the talk generally continued till a late hour. The Club was afterwards increased in numbers, and the weekly supper changed to a fortnightly dinner. It continued to thrive, and election to it came to be as great an honour in certain

The [illegible] his pages alone. The first must be the intro-[illegible] of Boswell to the sage. Boswell had come to [illegible] eager for the acquaintance of literary magnates. On[illegible]dy knew Goldsmith, who had inflamed [illegible] [illegible]troduction to Johnson. Once when B[illegible]pplied [illegible]t, one of Johnson's dependents, Golds[illegible]member [illegible] poor and honest, which is recommend[illegible] for his [illegible]son." Another time, when Boswell ha[illegible] great [illegible]son's kindness to a man of bad characte[illegible] [illegible]ad replied, "He is now become miserable [illegible] the protection of Johnson." Boswell ha[illegible] [illegible] introduction through the elder Sheridan; [illegible]eridan never forgot the contemptuous phrase in w[illegible] Johnson had referred to his fellow-pensioner. Possib[illegible] Sheridan had heard of one other Johnsonian remark. "Why, sir," he had said, "Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him Such an excess of stupidity, sir, is not in Nature." At another time he said, "Sheridan cannot bear me; I bring his declamation to a point." "What influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover to show light at Calais." Boswell, however, was acquainted with Davies, an actor turned bookseller, now chiefly remembered by a line in Churchill's *Rosciad* which is said to have driven him from the stage—

He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone.

Boswell was drinking tea with Davies and his wife in their back parlour when Johnson came into the shop. Davies, seeing him through the glass-door, announced his approach to Boswell in the spirit of Horatio addressing Hamlet:

"Look, my Lord, it comes!" Davies ...
young Scotchman, who remembered Johnson's ... n
prejudices. "Don't tell him where I come fro...
... "From Scotland," said Davies roguish...
It ... said Boswell, "I do indeed come ...
...ion ... I cannot help it!" "That, sir," was ...
of ... many retorts to his worshipper, "is wh...
... your countrymen cannot help" ...
... r Boswell was stunned; but he recovered ...
"What do you thi...
n order for the play...
e the house will be ...
h three shillings." "O, sir,"
intruded the unlucky Boswell, "I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir," replied Johnson sternly, "I have known David Garrick longer than you have done, and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." The second blow might have crushed a less intrepid curiosity. Boswell, though silenced, gradually recovered sufficiently to listen, and afterwards to note down parts of the conversation. As the interview went on, he even ventured to make a remark or two, which were very civilly received; Davies consoled him at his departure by assuring him that the great man liked him very well. "I cannot conceive a more humiliating position," said Beauclerk on another occasion, "than to be clapped on the back by Tom Davies." For the present, however, even Tom Davies was a welcome encourager to one who, for the rest, was not easily rebuffed. A few days afterwards Boswell ventured a call, was kindly received and detained for some time by "the giant in his den." He was still a little afraid of the said giant, who had shortly before administered a vigorous retort to his

The ... Blair. Blair had asked Johnson whether he ... it any man of a modern age could have written ... "Yes, sir," replied Johnson, "many men, man- ... and many children." Boswell, however, ...gh, ... and before long had the high honour ...pplied ... port with Johnson at the Mitre, an... member ... ittle autobiographical sketch, the en... for his ... "Give me your hand, I have taken a ... great ...h.

... very short time Boswell was on sufficient ... h Johnson, not merely to frequent his lev... ... him to dinner at the Mitre. He gathered ... though without the skill of his later performances, so... fragments of the conversational feast. The great man aimed another blow or two at Scotch prejudices. To an unlucky compatriot of Boswell's, who claimed for his country a great many "noble wild prospects," Johnson replied, "I believe, sir, you have a great many, Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, sir, let me tell you the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England." Though Boswell makes a slight remonstrance about the "rude grandeur of Nature" as seen in "Caledonia," he sympathized in this with his teacher. Johnson said afterwards, that he never knew any one with "such a gust for London." Before long he was trying Boswell's tastes by asking him in Greenwich Park, "Is not this very fine?" "Yes, sir," replied the promising disciple, "but not equal to Fleet Street." "You are right, sir," said the sage; and Boswell illustrates his dictum by the authority of a "very fashionable baronet," and, moreover, a baronet from Rydal, who declared that the fragrance of a May evening in the country might be very well, but

that he preferred the smell of a flambeau at [illegible] felt [illegible]
In more serious moods Johnson delighted his [illegible]
by discussic [illegible]
[illegible]ed
It [illegible]
[illegible]ion [illegible]er, rash enough to undertake the [illegible]
of [illegible] of political equality. Johnson's vi[illegible]

[illegible]

yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone [illegible] milk the bull." On another occasion poor Boswell, not yet acquainted with the master's prejudices, quoted with hearty laughter a "very strange" story which Hume had told him of Johnson. According to Hume, Johnson had said that he would stand before a battery of cannon to restore Convocation to its full powers. "And would I not, sir?" thundered out the sage with flashing eyes and threatening gestures. Boswell judiciously bowed to the storm, and diverted Johnson's attention. Another manifestation of orthodox prejudice was less terrible. Boswell told Johnson that he had heard a Quaker woman preach. "A woman's preaching," said Johnson, "is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

So friendly had the pair become, that when Boswell left England to continue his studies at Utrecht, Johnson accompanied him in the stage-coach to Harwich, amusing him on the way by his frankness of address to fellow-passengers, and by the voracity of his appetite. He gave him some excellent advice, remarking of a moth which flut-

The [illegible] ...dle, "that creature was its own tormentor, [illegible] its name was Boswell." He refuted Berkeley [illegible] his foot with mighty force against a large [illegible] rebounded from it. As the ship p[illegible] [illegible] watched him from the deck, whilst h[illegible] pplied [illegible] majestic frame in his usual man[illegible] member [illegible] endship was cemented, though Bos[illegible] for his [illegible] a time from the scene, travelled on [illegible] great [illegible] visited Paoli in Corsica. A friendly letter [illegible] the connexion till Boswell returned in 176[illegible] full of Corsica and a projected book of tra[illegible] [illegible] next year, 1767, occurred an incident upon [illegible] Boswell dwells with extreme complacency. Johnson [illegible] in the habit of sometimes reading in the King's Library, and it came into the head of his majesty that he should like to see the uncouth monster upon whom he had bestowed a pension. In spite of his semi-humorous Jacobitism, there was probably not a more loyal subject in his majesty's dominions. Loyalty is a word too often used to designate a sentiment worthy only of valets, advertising tradesmen, and writers of claptrap articles. But it deserves all respect when it reposes, as in Johnson's case, upon a profound conviction of the value of political subordination, and an acceptance of the king as the authorized representative of a great principle. There was no touch of servility in Johnson's respect for his sovereign, a respect fully reconcilable with a sense of his own personal dignity. Johnson spoke of his interview with an unfeigned satisfaction, which it would be difficult in these days to preserve from the taint of snobbishness. He described it frequently to his friends, and Boswell with pious care ascertained the details from Johnson himself, and from various secondary sources. He contrived afterwards to get his minute

submitted to the King himself,
its publication. When he was
he published this account with
ll pamphlet sold at a prohibitory pric
It e copyright.
ion aid Johnson afterwards, "that it
of lked to by his sovereign. In the f
t be in a passion." What other a

fly interesting as illustrating what Johnson meant by his politeness. He found that the King wanted him to talk, and he talked accordingly. He spoke in a "firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice," and not in the subdued tone customary at formal receptions. He dilated upon various literary topics, on the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, on some contemporary controversies, on the quack Dr. Hill, and upon the reviews of the day. All that is worth repeating is a complimentary passage which shows Johnson's possession of that courtesy which rests upon sense and self-respect. The King asked whether he was writing anything, and Johnson excused himself by saying that he had told the world what he knew for the present, and had "done his part as a writer." "I should have thought so too," said the King, "if you had not written so well." "No man," said Johnson, "could have paid a higher compliment; and it was fit for a King to pay—it was decisive." When asked if he had replied, he said, "No, sir. When the King had said it, it was to be. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my sovereign."

The[illegible] not the less delighted. "Sir," he said to [illegible], "they may talk of the King as they will, [illegible] the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And [illegible]ards compared his manners to those of [illegible] his favourite, Charles II. Gold[illegible]pplied [illegible] was silent during the narrative, be[illegible]member [illegible] and supposed) he was jealous of the[illegible] for his [illegible]ctator. But his natural simplicity p[illegible]great [illegible] Johnson, and exclaimed in 'a kind of [illegible] you acquitted yourself in this conversati[illegible] should have done, for I should have bo[illegible]ered through the whole of it."

[illegible]e years 1768 and 1769 were a period of great e[illegible]ment for Boswell. He was carrying on various [illegible] affairs, which ended with his marriage in the end of 1769. He was publishing his book upon Corsica and paying homage to Paoli, who arrived in England in the autumn of the same year. The book appeared in the beginning of 1768, and he begs his friend Temple to report all that is said about it, but with the restriction that he is to conceal *all censure.* He particularly wanted Gray's opinion, as Gray was a friend of Temple's. Gray's opinion, not conveyed to Boswell, was expressed by his calling it "a dialogue between a green goose and a hero." Boswell, who was cultivating the society of various eminent people, exclaims triumphantly in a letter to Temple (April 26, 1768), "I am really the great man now." Johnson and Hume had called upon him on the same day, and Garrick, Franklin, and Oglethorpe also partook of his "admirable dinners and good claret." "This," he says, with the sense that he deserved his honours, "is enjoying the fruit of my labours, and appearing like the friend of Paoli." Johnson in vain expressed a wish that he would "empty his head of

Corsica, which had filled it too long." ... of C... [illegible]

em... [illegible]

...very wise man has himself to cure of it, and does ... himself. If you wish to make people stare by doing better than others, why make them stare till they stare their eyes out. But consider how easy it is to make people stare by being absurd"—a proposition which he proceeds to illustrate by examples perhaps less telling than Boswell's recent performance.

The sage was less communicative on the question of marriage, though Boswell had anticipated some "instructive conversation" upon that topic. His sole remark was one from which Boswell "humbly differed." Johnson maintained that a wife was not the worse for being learned. Boswell, on the other hand, defined the proper degree of intelligence to be desired in a female companion by some verses in which Sir Thomas Overbury says that a wife should have some knowledge, and be "by nature wise, not learned much by art." Johnson said afterwards that Mrs. Boswell was in a proper degree inferior to her husband. So far as we can tell, she seems to have been a really sensible and good woman, who kept her husband's absurdities in check, and was, in her way

The[illegible] he deserved. So, happily, are most [illegible] and Boswell had several meetings in 1769. On [illegible] the honour of introducing the [illegible] idolatry, Johnson and Paoli, and applied [illegible] entertained a party including Gol[illegible] member [illegible] and Reynolds, at his lodgings in Old [illegible] for his [illegible] still see the meeting more distinctly [illegible] great [illegible] been swallowed by a few days of oblivion. [illegible] for one of the party, Johnson kindly ma[illegible] ought to be kept waiting for one, if [illegible] suffer more by the others sitting down th[illegible] six by waiting. Meanwhile Garrick "played [illegible] Johnson with a fond vivacity, taking hold of [illegible] breasts of his coat, looking up in his face with a lively archness," and complimenting him on his good health Goldsmith strutted about bragging of his dress, of which Boswell, in the serene consciousness of superiority to such weakness, thought him seriously vain. "Let me tell you," said Goldsmith, "when my tailor brought home my bloom-coloured coat, he said, 'Sir, I have a favour to beg of you; when anybody asks you who made your clothes, be pleased to mention John Filby, at the Harrow, Water Lane.'" "Why, sir," said Johnson, "that was because he knew that the strange colour would attract crowds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour." Mr. Filby has gone the way of all tailors and bloom-coloured coats, but some of his bills are preserved. On the day of this dinner he had delivered to Goldsmith a half-dress suit of ratteen lined with satin, costing twelve guineas, a pair of silk stocking-breeches for £2 5*s.* and a pair of bloom-coloured ditto for £1 4*s.* 6*d.* The

bill, including other items, was paid, it
-ld, in February, 1771.

The conversation was chiefly literary. Jo
concluding lines of the *Dunciad*;
It bably Boswell) ventured to say th
ion uch a poem—a poem on what?"
of "on dunces! It was worth whi
Ah, sir, hadst *thou* lived in those
presently uttered a criticism which h
le to think that he had a touch of the
He declared that a description of a tem
e's *Mourning Bride* was the finest he knew
han anything in Shakspeare. Garrick vainly
ested; but Johnson was inexorable. He compared
ongreve to a man who had only ten guineas in the world
but all in one coin; whereas Shakspeare might have te
thousand separate guineas. The principle of the criticis
is rather curious. "What I mean is," said Johnson, "tha
you can show me no passage where there is simply
description of material objects, without any admixtu
of moral notions, which produces such an effect." Th
description of the night before Agincourt was reject
because there were men in it; and the description
Dover Cliff because the boats and the crows "impede y
fall." They do "not impress your mind at once wi
the horrible idea of immense height. The impression
divided; you pass on by computation from one stage
the tremendous space to another."

Probably most people will think that the passage
question deserves a very slight fraction of the praise
stowed upon it; but the criticism, like most of Johnso
has a meaning which might be worth examining
stractedly from the special application which shocks

The[illegible] not [illegible]speare. Presently the party discussed [illegible] [illegible]agu, whose Essay upon Shakspeare had made [illegible]e. Johnson had a respect for her, caused in [illegible]e by a sense of her liberality to his [illegible], [illegible] whom more must be said he[illegible]pplied [illegible] some tremendous compliments, [illegible]member [illegible]na plates which had belonged to Q[illegible] for his [illegible]ler, had no reason to be ashamed of a [illegible]reat [illegible]nferior to the first. But he had his usual [illegible] contempt for her amateur performances in [illegible]efence of Shakspeare against Voltaire did her [illegible]dmitted, but it would do nobody else honour. [illegible] sir, there is no real criticism in it: none showi[illegible] beauty of thought, as formed on the workings of the hu[illegible] heart." Mrs. Montagu was reported once to have com[illegible]plimented a modern tragedian, probably Jephson, by saying, "I tremble for Shakspeare." "When Shakspeare," said Johnson, "has got Jephson for his rival and Mrs Montagu for his defender, he is in a poor state indeed." The conversation went on to a recently published book, *Kames's Elements of Criticism*, which Johnson praised, whilst Goldsmith said more truly, "It is easier to write that book than to read it." Johnson went on to speak of other critics. "There is no great merit," he said, "in *telling* how many plays have ghosts in them, and how this ghost is better than that. You must show how terror is impressed on the human heart. In the description of night in *Macbeth* the beetle and the bat detract from the general idea of darkness—inspissated gloom."

After Boswell's marriage he disappeared for some time from London, and his correspondence with Johnson dropped, as he says, without coldness, from pure procrastination. He did not return to London till 1772. In the

spring of that and the following year he

·lub. It ought apparently
d him upon the Club by letting it be understood that, till Boswell was admitted, no other candidate would have a chance. Boswell, however, was, as his proposer said, a thoroughly "clubable" man, and once a member, his good humour secured his popularity. On the important evening Boswell dined at Beauclerk's with his proposer and some other members. The talk turned upon Goldsmith's merits; and Johnson not only defended his poetry, but preferred him as a historian to Robertson. Such a judgment could be explained in Boswell's opinion by nothing but Johnson's dislike to the Scotch. Once before, when Boswell had mentioned Robertson in order to meet Johnson's condemnation of Scotch literature in general, Johnson had evaded him; "Sir, I love Robertson, and I won't talk of his book." On the present occasion he said that he would give to Robertson the advice offered by an old college tutor to a pupil; "read over your compositions, and whenever you meet with a passage which you think particularly fine, strike it out."

The ... not ... of Goldsmith followed. Johnson had ... once in the Poets' Corner at Westminster,—

> ... rsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.

... gh, ... pplied ... y got to Temple Bar Goldsmith ... member ... , the Jacobites upon it and slily su... n for his ... great

> Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.

... on next pronounced a critical judgment w... against many sins of that kind. He pr... *lgrim's Progress* very warmly, and suggested tha... had probably read Spenser.

After more talk the gentlemen went to the Club ... poor Boswell remained trembling with an anxiety wh... even the claims of Lady Di Beauclerk's conversation could not dissipate. The welcome news of his election was brought; and Boswell went to see Burke for the first time, and to receive a humorous charge from Johnson, pointing out the conduct expected from him as a good member. Perhaps some hints were given as to betrayal of confidence. Boswell seems at any rate to have had a certain reserve in repeating Club talk.

This intimacy with Johnson was about to receive a more public and even more impressive stamp. The antipathy to Scotland and the Scotch already noticed was one of Johnson's most notorious crotchets. The origin of the prejudice was forgotten by Johnson himself, though he was willing to accept a theory started by old Sheridan that it was resentment for the betrayal of Charles I. There is, however, nothing surprising in Johnson's partaking a prejudice common enough from the days of his youth, when each people supposed itself to have been cheated by the

Union, and Englishmen resented the [illegible] th
needy adventurers, talking with a strange [illegible]
ing together with honourable but vexatiou[illegible]
was irritated by what [illegible]
It [illegible] English preju[illegible]
[illegible]ion [illegible] always ready t[illegible]
of [illegible] he said, "are [illegible]

[illegible] feeling themselves, if by any honest means they can do it!" It was "better to hang or drown people at once," than weaken them by unrelenting persecution. He felt some tenderness for Catholics, especially when oppressed, and a hearty antipathy towards prosperous Presbyterians. The Lowland Scotch were typified by John Knox, in regard to whom he expressed a hope, after viewing the ruins of St. Andrew's, that he was buried "in the highway."

This sturdy British and High Church prejudice did not prevent the worthy doctor from having many warm friendships with Scotchmen, and helping many distressed Scotchmen in London. Most of the amanuenses employed for his *Dictionary* were Scotch. But he nourished the prejudice the more as giving an excellent pretext for many keen gibes. "Scotch learning," he said, for example, "is like bread in a besieged town. Every man gets a mouthful, but no man a bellyful." Once Strahan said in an

The [illegible] not [illegible] of [illegible] re remarks, "Well, sir, God made [illegible] once [illegible] tainly," replied Johnson, "but we must [illegible] ber that He made it for Scotchmen; and [illegible] e odious, Mr. Strahan, but God mad [illegible] [illegible] refore, had *reason to feel both* [illegible] ied [illegible] he induced the great man to ac [illegible] ember [illegible] th [illegible] tour. Boswell's journal of the [illegible] for his [illegible] Johnson's death. *Johnson himse* [illegible] eat [illegible] f it, which is not without interest, thoug [illegible] [illegible] dignified style, which does not condescen [illegible] [illegible] touches of character. In 1773 the Scotc [illegible] [illegible] *nds* were still a little known region, justifying [illegible] *descriptive of manners and customs*, and touchin [illegible] antiquities now the commonplaces of innumerable [illegible] books. Scott was still an infant, and the day of enth [illegible] siasm, real or affected, for mountain scenery had not yet dawned. *Neither of the travellers, as Boswell remarks*, cared much for "rural beauties." Johnson says quaintly on the shores of Loch Ness, "It will very readily occur that this uniformity of barrenness can afford very little amusement to the traveller; that it *is easy to sit at home* and conceive rocks and heath and waterfalls; and that these journeys are useless labours, which neither impregnate the imagination nor enlarge the understanding." And though he *shortly afterwards sits down on a bank* "such as a writer of romance might have delighted to feign," and there conceived the thought of his book, he does not seem to have felt much enthusiasm. He checked Boswell *for* describing a hill as "immense," and told him that it was only a "considerable protuberance." Indeed it is not surprising if he sometimes grew weary in long rides upon Highland ponies, or if, when weatherbound in a remote village in Skye, he declared that this was a "waste of life"

On the whole, however, Johnson bo[illegible] preserved his temper, and made sen[illegible] men and things. The pair started from [illegible] [illegible]iddle of August, 1773; they went nor[illegible] It [illegible]t, through St. Andrew's, Abe[illegible] [illegible]ion [illegible]nd Inverness. There they to[illegible] of [illegible] and took boat for Skye, where t[illegible] [illegible] September. *They visited Ra*[illegible] [illegible] Iona, and after some dangerous sailin[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]ously investigated stories of second-sight, cross-examined and brow-beat credulous believers in the authenticity of *Ossian*, and felt his piety grow warm among the ruins of Iona. Once or twice, when the temper of the travellers was tried by the various worries incident to their position, poor Boswell came in for some severe blows. But he was happy, feeling, as he remarks, like a dog who has run away with a large piece of meat, and is devouring it peacefully in a corner by himself. Boswell's spirits were irrepressible. On hearing a drum beat for dinner at Fort George, he says, with a Pepys-like touch, "I for a little while fancied myself a military man, and it pleased me." He got scandalously drunk on one occasion, and showed reprehensible levity on others. He bored Johnson by inquiring too curiously into his reasons for not wearing a nightcap—a subject which seems to have interested him profoundly; he permitted himself to say in his

[illegible] s so much pleased with some pretty [illegible] Duke of Argyll's, that he felt he could [illegible] knight-errant for them," and his "venerable [illegible]ler" read the passage without censuring [illegible] great man himself could be equ[illegible]ed [illegible] *thought*," he observed one d[illegible]ber [illegible] "that if I kept a seraglio, th[illegible]r his [illegible]nen gowns"—as more cleanly. [illegible] to stimulate the feudal zeal of various [illegible] with whom they came in contact, and [illegible]sonable enough to show a hankering after t[illegible] *civilization.*

Though Johnson seems to have been general[illegible] best behaviour, he had a rough encounter or t[illegible] some of the more civilized natives. Boswell pilote[illegible] safely through a visit to Lord Monboddo, a man of [illegible] ability, though the proprietor of crochets as eccentric as Johnson's, and consequently divided from him by strong mutual prejudices. At Auchinleck he was less fortunate. The old laird, who was the staunchest of Whigs, had not relished his son's hero-worship. "There is nae hope for Jamie, mon; Jamie is gaen clean gyte. What do you think, mon? He's done wi' Paoli—he's off wi' the land-louping scoundrel of a Corsican, and who's tail do you think he's pinned himself to now, mon?" "Here," says Sir Walter Scott, the authority for the story, "the old judge summoned up a sneer of most sovereign contempt. 'A dominie, mon—an auld dominie—he keeped a schüle and caauld it an acaademy.'" The two managed to keep the peace till, one day during Johnson's visit, *they got* upon *Oliver Cromwell. Boswell suppresses* the scene with obvious reluctance, his openness being checked for once by filial respect. Scott has fortu-

nately preserved the climax of old ... "What had Cromwell done for ...," ... Johnson. "God, doctor, he gart Kings ... lith in their necks" retorted ... It ... thy of Mr. Carlyle himself. ... at which respectable comp... of ... their hands in horror. ... that it involves an obviou... d to allow us ... on. Adam Sm... had an altercati... of Hume's death ... rs later, there must ... however, whatever its ... saying to Smith, "*You* ..." was asked of Smith. "I said, 'you are a son of a ——.'" "On such terms," says Scott, "did these two great moralists meet and part, and such was the classical dialogue between these two great teachers of morality."

In the year 1774 Boswell found it expedient to atone for his long absence in the previous year by staying at home. Johnson managed to complete his account of the *Scotch Tour*, which was published at the end of the year. Among other consequences was a violent controversy with the lovers of *Ossian*. Johnson was a thorough sceptic as to the authenticity of the book. His scepticism did not repose upon the philological or antiquarian reasonings, which would be applicable in the controversy from internal evidence. It was to some extent the expression of a general incredulity which astonished his friends, especially when contrasted with his tenderness for many puerile superstitions. He could scarcely be induced to admit the

The [illegible] of [illegible] which struck him as odd, and [illegible] [illegible] before he would believe even in the [illegible] [illegible] like. Yet he seriously discussed the truth [illegible]; he carefully investigated the Co[illegible] [illegible] who anticipated some of the m[illegible]ed [illegible] [illegible]lled "spiritualism," and with [illegible]mber [illegible] told stories to Boswell abo[illegible] for his [illegible]h had once been seen by Cave, [illegible] [illegible]d once heard his mother call "Sam" wh[illegible] [illegible] Oxford and she at Lichfield. The appare[illegible] [illegible] was in truth natural enough. Any m[illegible] [illegible] with unreasonable pertinacity to the prejud[illegible] *his childhood, must* be alternately *credulous* and sc[illegible] in excess. In both cases, he judges by his fancies i[illegible] fiance of evidence; and accepts and rejects according [illegible] his likes and dislikes, instead of his estimates of logic[illegible] proof. *Ossian* would be naturally offensive to Johnson, as one of the earliest and most remarkable manifestations of that growing taste for what was called "Nature," as opposed to civilization, of which Rousseau was the great mouthpiece. Nobody more heartily despised this form of "cant" than Johnson. A man who utterly despised the scenery of the Hebrides as compared with Greenwich Park or Charing Cross, would hardly take kindly to the Ossianesque version of the mountain passion. The book struck him as sheer rubbish. I have already quoted the retort about "many men, many women, and many children." "A man," he said, on another occasion, "might write such stuff for ever, if he would abandon his mind to it."

The precise point, however, upon which he rested his case, was the tangible one of the inability of Macpherson to produce the manuscripts of which he had affirmed the

You may print this if you will.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

And so laying in a tremendous cudgel, the old gentleman (he was now sixty-six) awaited the assault, which, however, was not delivered.

In 1775 Boswell again came to London, and renewed some of the Scotch discussions. He attended a meeting of the Literary Club, and found the members disposed to laugh at Johnson's tenderness to the stories about second-sight. Boswell heroically avowed his own belief. "The evidence," he said, "is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle, will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief." "Are you?" said Colman; "then cork it up."

It was during this and the next few years that Boswell laboured most successfully in gathering materials for his book. In 1777 he only met Johnson in the country In

The [illegible] ot [illegible] ained reason, he was lazy in making [illegible] 1781 he was absent from London; [illegible] owing year, Johnson was visibly declin[illegible]
On [illegible] Johnson's life was interrupted [illegible]h, [illegible] remarkable incidents, and [illegible]pplied [illegible] ot great, although the co[illegible] member [illegible] for his [illegible] Poets falls between 1777 a[illegible] great [illegible] vever, as represented by his talk, wa[illegible] I will take in order of time a few of the [illegible] ed by Boswell, which may serve for vario[illegible] ford the best illustration of his character. [illegible] may be worth while once more to repeat the [illegible] that such fragments moved from their context m[illegible] most of their charm.

On March 26th (1775), Boswell met Johnson at [illegible] house of the publisher, Strahan. Strahan reminded Johnson of a characteristic remark which he had formerly made, that there are "few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money." On another occasion Johnson observed with equal truth, if less originality, that cultivating kindness was an important part of life, as well as money-making. Johnson then asked to see a country lad whom he had recommended to Strahan as an apprentice. He asked for five guineas on account, that he might give one to the boy. "Nay, if a man recommends a boy and does nothing for him, it is sad work." A "little, thick short-legged boy" was accordingly brought into the courtyard, whither Johnson and Boswell descended, and the lexicographer bending himself down administered some good advice to the awe-struck lad with "slow and sonorous solemnity," ending by the presentation of the guinea.

In the evening the pair formed part of a corps of party

... was, led by Sir Joshua Re... Abingdon, who had been a f... Johnson praised Garrick's p... the eulogy to Garr... It ... Garrick treat... ed, ... poor ... calm ... ed ... g the gr... as gener... and used to ... ne convivial

... f Gray, one ... that Gray was dull in poetry. "Sir," replied Johnson, "he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made people think him great. He was a mechanical poet." He proceeded to say that there were only two good stanzas in the *Elegy*. Johnson's criticism was perverse; but if we were to collect a few of the judgments passed by contemporaries upon each other, it would be scarcely exceptional in its want of appreciation. It is rather odd to remark that Gray was generally condemned for obscurity—a charge which seems strangely out of place when he is measured by more recent standards.

A day or two afterwards some one rallied Johnson on his appearance at Mrs. Abingdon's benefit. "Why did you go?" he asked. "Did you see?" "No, sir." "Did you hear?" "No, sir." "Why, then, sir, did you

The [illegible] not [illegible], she is a favourite of the public [illegible] cares the thousandth part for yo[illegible] [illegible]her, I will go to your benefit too."

On [illegible] Boswell [illegible] on a bet from [illegible]gh, [illegible]turing to ask Johnson wh[illegible]pplied [illegible] which he used to p[illegible] [illegible]member [illegible] question amicably, but d[illegible] [illegible]n for his [illegible] "Then," said Boswell, "the wo[illegible] great [illegible] the dark. It must be said, he scrape[illegible] [illegible] let them dry, but what he did with th[illegible] [illegible] could be prevailed upon to tell." "N[illegible] [illegible]lied Johnson, "you should say it more empha[illegible] he could not be prevailed upon, even by his [illegible] friends to tell."

This year Johnson received the degree of LL.D. [illegible] Oxford. He had previously (in 1765) received the same honour from Dublin. It is remarkable, however, that familiar as the title has become, Johnson called himself plain Mr. to the end of his days, and was generally so called by his intimates. On April 2nd, at a dinner at Hoole's, Johnson made another assault upon Gray and Mason. When Boswell said that there were good passages in Mason's *Elfrida*, he conceded that there were "now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner." After some more talk, Boswell spoke of the cheerfulness of Fleet Street. "Why, sir," said Johnson, "Fleet Street has a very animated appearance, but I think that the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross." He added a story of an eminent tallow-chandler who had made a fortune in London, and was foolish enough to retire to the country. He grew so tired of his retreat, that he begged to know the melting-days of his successor, that he might be present at the operation.

but then ...

turned u

tion to its

It

ion

of

...ould not like to

ered in a low tone

with *you*"—a prudent

o hated Gibbon, if it

, and Johnson laid down an apophthegm, at "which many will start," many people, in fact, having little sense of humour. Such persons may be reminded for their comfort that at this period patriot had a technical meaning. "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." On the 10th of April, he laid down another dogma, calculated to offend the weaker brethren. He defended Pope's line—

Man never *is* but always *to be* blest.

And being asked if man did not sometimes enjoy a momentary happiness, replied, "Never, but when he is drunk." It would be useless to defend these and other such utterances to any one who cannot enjoy them without defence.

On April 11th, the pair went in Reynolds's coach to dine with Cambridge, at Twickenham. Johnson was in high spirits. He remarked as they drove down, upon the

… c in life. One friend … At last, … her, I, *acid*, and …

… ambridge's house, Johnson ran to … "Mr. Johnson," said Cambridge politely … ng with your pardon to accuse myself, … same custom which I perceive you have. … ms odd that one should have such a desire to … the backs of books." "Sir," replied Johnson, w… about at the words, "the reason is very plain. K… ledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselve… we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and the backs of books in libraries."

A pleasant talk followed. Johnson denied the value attributed to historical reading, on the ground that we know very little except a few facts and dates. All the colouring, he said, was conjectural. Boswell chuckles over the reflection that Gibbon, who was present, did not take up the cudgels for his favourite study, though the first-fruits of his labours were to appear in the following year. "Probably he did not like to trust himself with Johnson"

The conversation presently turned upon the *Beggar's Opera*, and Johnson sensibly refused to believe that any man had been made a rogue by seeing it. Yet the moralist felt bound to utter some condemnation of such a performance, and at last, amidst the smothered amusement of the company, collected himself to give a heavy stroke:

but ther ...

"there ... being, he said, "such ...

of Johnston's political prejudices. He hated Whigs blindly from his cradle; but he justified his hatred on the ground that they were now all "bottomless Whigs," that is to say, that pierce where you would, you came upon no definite creed, but only upon hollow formulæ, intended as a cloak for private interest. If Burke and one or two of his friends be excepted, the remark had but too much justice.

In 1776, Boswell found Johnson rejoicing in the prospect of a journey to Italy with the Thrales. Before starting he was to take a trip to the country, in which Boswell agreed to join. Boswell gathered up various bits of advice before their departure. One seems to have commended itself to him as specially available for practice. "A man who had been drinking freely," said the moralist, "should never go into a new company. He

... them as ridicu... ...ough ... been drinkin... with those other favourite... ...pplied ... ...member ...n for his ... great

...ch 19th, they went by coach to the ... and next morning visited the M... ...r College, who chose with Boswell to ac... ...n to a very sound bit of advice given by J... soon afterwards—perhaps with some reference to ... ceeding. "Never speak of a man in his own prese... is always indelicate and may be offensive." The two, ... ever, discussed Johnson without reserve. The Master ... that he would have given Johnson a hundred pounds fo... discourse on the British Constitution; and Boswell su... gested that Johnson should write two volumes of ... great bulk upon Church and State, which should compr... the whole substance of the argument. "He should ere... a fort on the confines of each." Johnson was not unn... turally displeased with the dialogue, and growled ou... "Why should I be always writing?"

Presently, they went to see Dr. Adams, the docto... old friend, who had been answering Hume. Boswell, wh... had done his best to court the acquaintance of Voltair... Rousseau, Wilkes, and Hume himself, felt it desirable t... reprove Adams for having met Hume with civility. H... aired his admirable sentiments in a long speech, observin... upon the connexion between theory and practice, and re... marking, by way of practical application, that, if an Infide... were at once vain and ugly, he might be compared t... "Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue"—which would, as h...

but then think, be a crushing re[illegible] felt be the delight [illegible]
him.

[illegible] argument.
[illegible] dimini
[illegible] our
of

t-chaise past Blenheim, [illegible]
elhouse. Johnston boast[illegible]
vanished if it ever existed,
and quoted with great emo-

[illegible] life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
Must sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.

As they drove along rapidly in the post-chaise, he exclaimed, "Life has not many better things than this." On another occasion he said that he should like to spend his life driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman, clever enough to add to the conversation. The pleasure was partly owing to the fact that his deafness was less troublesome in a carriage. But he admitted that there were drawbacks even to this pleasure. Boswell asked him whether he would not add a post-chaise journey to the other sole cause of happiness—namely, drunkenness. "No, sir," said Johnson, "you are driving rapidly *from* something or *to* something."

They went to Birmingham, where Boswell pumped

... ir 's early days, and saw th ... g ... e ... ac her, who said ... been drinking ... world desires ... other favourite ... gh, ... se than a gaol. ... pplied ... better company, better ... member ... and a ship ... was additio ... n for his ... anger." ... time!" ... ch 19th, ... great ... only son. Boswell ... to the ... and ne ... event, and was some time ... a proper concern. He was, however, " ... serve how Dr. Johnson would be affected," and w... a little scandalized by the reply to his consolatory ... that the Thrales still had daughters. "Sir," said J... "don't you know how you yourself think? S... wishes to propagate his name." The great man ... actually putting the family sentiment of a brewer in th... same category with the sentiments of the heir of Auchin... leck. Johnson, however, calmed down, but resolved t... hurry back to London. They stayed a night at Taylor's... who remarked that he had fought a good many battle... for a physician, one of their common friends. "But you should consider, sir," said Johnson, "that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for every man of whom you get the better will be very angry, and resolve not to employ him, whereas if people get the better of you in argument about him, they will think 'We'll send for Dr. —— nevertheless!'"

It was after their return to London that Boswell won the greatest triumph of his friendship. He carried through a negotiation, to which, as Burke pleasantly said, there was nothing equal in the whole history of the *corps diplomatique*. At some moment of enthusiasm it had occurred

but to bring Johnson into ...

light

m.

...herself,

by the Dillys, well-...

...t Wilkes. "Let us h...

...at Boswell. "Not for the

..., on Boswell's undertaking

... the experiment. Boswell

...ely invited him in Dilly's

...m," said Johnson. "Provided, sir, I suppose," said the diplomatic Boswell, "that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you." "What do you mean, sir?" exclaimed Johnson. "What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" Boswell worked the point a little farther, till, by judicious manipulation, he had got Johnson to commit himself to meeting anybody—even Jack Wilkes, to make a wild hypothesis—at the Dillys' table. Boswell retired, venturing to hope that he had fixed the discussion in Johnson's mind.

The great day arrived, and Boswell, like a consummate general who leaves nothing to chance, went himself to fetch Johnson to the dinner. The great man had forgotten the engagement, and was "buffeting his books" in a dirty shirt and amidst clouds of dust. When reminded

[illegible] that he had ordered [illegible] ugh he [illegible] ams. Entreatie[illegible] been drinking [illegible] softened [illegible] ther favourite [illegible] gh, [illegible] than a gaol. [illegible] pplied [illegible] better [illegible] pany, better [illegible] member [illegible] nd a ship [illegible] addit[illegible] n for his [illegible] anger." [illegible] post-chaise [illegible] great [illegible] ch 19th [illegible] the joy was with [illegible] ch to the [illegible] and ne [illegible] son found himself amongst [illegible] ell watched anxiously from a corner. "Who [illegible] tleman?" whispered Johnson to Dilly. "Mr. [illegible] ee." Johnson whistled "too-too-too" doubtful[illegible] ee was a patriot and an American. "And who [illegible] entleman in lace?" "Mr. Wilkes, sir." Johnson [illegible] ided into a window-seat and fixed his eye on a bo[illegible] He was fairly in the toils. His reproof of Boswell was [illegible]ecent enough to prevent him from exhibiting his dis[illegible]leasure, and he resolved to restrain himself.

At dinner Wilkes, placed next to Johnson, took up his [illegible]art in the performance. He pacified the sturdy moralist [illegible]y delicate attentions to his needs. He helped him care[illegible]ully to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, sir; it is [illegible]etter here—a little of the brown—some fat, sir—a little [illegible]f the stuffing—some gravy—let me have the pleasure of [illegible]iving you some butter. Allow me to recommend a [illegible]queeze of this orange; or the lemon, perhaps, may have [illegible]ore zest." "Sir, sir," cried Johnson, "I am obliged to [illegible]ou, sir," bowing and turning to him, with a look for [illegible]me time of "surly virtue," and soon of complacency.

Gradually the conversation became cordial. Johnson told of the fascination exercised by Foote, who, like Wilkes, had succeeded in pleasing him against his will.

but there ... to selling beer, a ...
... one of h...
... said ...
Johnson, ...
argument
dimini...

... rwise. ...
... to him." The
... had it been
... too great for
... e difficulty of
... e had wished
to write a life of Dryden, he applied to two living men who remembered him. One could only tell him that Dryden had a chair by the fire at Will's Coffee-house in winter, which was moved to the balcony in summer. The other (Cibber) could only report that he remembered Dryden as a "decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's."

Johnson and Wilkes had one point in common—a vigorous prejudice against the Scotch, and upon this topic they cracked their jokes in friendly emulation. When they met upon a later occasion (1781), they still pursued this inexhaustible subject. Wilkes told how a privateer had completely plundered seven Scotch islands, and re-embarked with three and sixpence. Johnson now remarked in answer to somebody who said "Poor old England is lost!" "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it."

[illegible] he said to Wilke[illegible] ough he [illegible] been drinking [illegible] well and show[illegible] her favourite [illegible] provincial [illegible] than a gaol. [illegible] pplied [illegible] better company, better [illegible] member [illegible] and a ship [illegible] additi[illegible] m for his [illegible] danger." [illegible] people [illegible] great [illegible] ch 19th, [illegible] added Johnso[illegible] ch to the [illegible] and [illegible] to bear some jokes ag[illegible] Col[illegible] from the pair; but he had triu[illegible] oiced greatly when he went home with Johns[illegible] heard the great man speak of his pleasant dinner[illegible] Williams. *Johnson seems to have been perm[illegible] reconciled to his foe. "Did we not hear so muc[illegible] of Jack Wilkes," he remarked next year, "we s[illegible] think more highly of his conversation.* Jack has a great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But, after hearing his name sounded from pole to pole as the phœnix of convivial felicity, we are disappointed in his company. He has always been at *me*, but I would do Jack a kindness rather than not. The contest is now over."

In fact, Wilkes had ceased to play any part in public life. When Johnson met him next (in 1781) they joked about such dangerous topics as some of Wilkes's political performances. Johnson sent him a copy of the *Lives*, and they were seen conversing *tête-à-tête* in confidential whispers about George II. and the King of Prussia. To Boswell's mind it suggested the happy days when the lion should lie down with the kid, or, as Dr. Barnard suggested, the goat.

In the year 1777 Johnson began the *Lives of the Poets*, in compliance with a request from the booksellers, who

but there ... faces to a large ... [illegible] ... felt ...
... Chr... Johnson ... argument ... diminish ... already ... would ... a chit... Johnson ... guilty ... pr...
...ys have been thought worthy of so severe a pun...
...cked by the
... than by the
...nson exerted
... by writing
... He seems

to have been deeply moved by the man's appeal, and could "not bear the thought" that any negligence of his should lead to the death of a fellow-creature; but he said that if he had himself been in authority he would have signed the death-warrant, and for the man himself he had as little respect as might be. He said, indeed, that Dodd was right in not joining in the "cant" about leaving a wretched world. "No, no," said the poor rogue, "it has been a very agreeable world to me." Dodd had allowed to pass for his own one of the papers composed for him by Johnson, and the Doctor was not quite pleased. When, however, Seward expressed a doubt as to Dodd's power of writing so forcibly, Johnson felt bound not to expose him. "Why should you think so? Depend upon it, sir, when any man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully." On another occasion, Johnson expressed a doubt

[illegible] Dodd had really com[illegible] [illegible] been drinking [illegible] before his ex[illegible] other favourite th[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] and a [illegible] n for his [illegible] anger." [illegible] pardon [illegible] great [illegible] ch 19th, [illegible] ing thus fervent [illegible] to the [illegible] and [illegible] at Taylor's was chara[illegible] [illegible] tual to his disciple, and Boswell [illegible] could defend his master at "the point of his s[illegible] "My regard for you," said Johnson, "is greater than I have words to express, but I do not choose [illegible] always repeating it. Write it down in the first le[illegible] *your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again."* [illegible] became sentimental, and talked of the misery of human life. Boswell spoke of the pleasures of society. "Alas, sir," replied Johnson, like a true pessimist, "these are only struggles for happiness!" He felt exhilarated, he said, when he first went to Ranelagh, but he changed to the mood of Xerxes weeping at the sight of his army. "It went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think; but that the thoughts of each individual would be distressing when alone." Some years before he had gone with Boswell to the Pantheon and taken a more cheerful view. When Boswell doubted whether there were many happy people present, he said, "Yes, sir, there are many happy people here. There are many people here who are watching hundreds, and who think hundreds are watching them." The more permanent feeling was that which he expressed in the "serene autumn night" in Taylor's garden. He was willing, however, to talk

but there [illegible] eternal punishment, [illegible] felt [illegible] th[illegible]
[illegible] benignant [illegible]
[illegible] Ch[illegible] ask [illegible]
Johnson, [illegible]
[illegible] argument [illegible]
[illegible] diminish [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] loudest yelps [illegible]
[illegible] drivers of negroes?" The harmo[illegible]
[illegible] unluckily spoilt by an explosion of
[illegible]swell undertook the defence of the
[illegible]iscussion became so fierce that though
[illegible]ssed a willingness to sit up all night
with him, they were glad to part after an hour or two, and go to bed.

In 1778, Boswell came to London and found Johnson absorbed, to an extent which apparently excited his jealousy, by his intimacy with the Thrales. They had, however, several agreeable meetings. One was at the club, and Boswell's report of the conversation is the fullest that we have of any of its meetings. A certain reserve is indicated by his using initials for the interlocutors, of whom, however, one can be easily identified as Burke. The talk began by a discussion of an antique statue, said to be the dog of Alcibiades, and valued at 1000*l.* Burke said that the representation of no animal could be worth so much. Johnson, whose taste for art was a vanishing quantity, said that the value was proportional to the difficulty. A statue, as he argued on another occasion, would be worth nothing if it were cut out of a carrot. Every-

[illegible] was valuable which "[illegible]ough he [illegible]ers." The first [illegible] been drinking [illegible]ose, or rode [illegible]ther favourite [illegible]gh, [illegible] than a gaol. [illegible]pplied [illegible] better [illegible]pany, better [illegible]member [illegible] and a ship [illegible] additi[illegible]n for his [illegible]anger." [illegible]

[illegible]ch 19th, [illegible] maintain[illegible]ch to the A[illegible] and ne[illegible]ough it would be [illegible] from some profounder econom[illegible] that a country would be made more populo[illegible] [illegible]igration. "There are bulls enough in Ireland," remarked incidentally in the course of the argu[illegible] "So, sir, I should think from your argument," said J[illegible]son, for once condescending to an irresistible pun. [illegible] recorded, too, that he once made a bull himself, observin[illegible] that a horse was so slow that when it went up hill, it stood still. If he now failed to appreciate Burke's argument, he made one good remark. Another speaker said that unhealthy countries were the most populous. "Countries which are the most populous," replied Johnson, "have the most destructive diseases. That is the true state of the proposition;" and indeed, the remark applies to the case of emigration.

A discussion then took place as to whether it would be worth while for Burke to take so much trouble with speeches which never decided a vote. Burke replied that a speech, though it did not gain one vote, would have an influence, and maintained that the House of Commons was not wholly corrupt. "We are all more or less governed by interest," was Johnson's comment. "But interest will not do everything. In a case which admits of doubt, we try to think on the side which is for our inte-

and perhaps the worst man might do more good than not. But when Boswell suggested that perhaps experience might increase our estimate of human happiness, Johnson returned to his habitual pessimism. "No, sir, the more we inquire, the more we shall find men less happy." The talk soon wandered off into a disquisition upon the folly of deliberately testing the strength of our friend's affection.

The evening ended by Johnson accepting a commission to write to a friend who had given to the Club a hogshead of claret, and to request another, with "a happy ambiguity of expression," in the hopes that it might also be a present.

Some days afterwards, another conversation took place, which has a certain celebrity in Boswellian literature. The scene was at Dilly's, and the guests included Miss

... wles, a well-known Quak... ...dgh he ... seized upon a ... been drinking ... ... anner, wrapped ... her favourite ... ... distracts than a gaol. ... better company, better ... pplied ... and a ship ... addition ... member ... anger." ... in for his ... ch 19th, ... in opp ... h to the ... great ... and ... beyond the sphe ... discussion upon the pri ...

Johnson put down Mrs. Knowles, who ha ... kering for women's rights, by the Shaks... maxim that if two men ride on a horse, one mus... behind. Driven from her position in this world, Mrs. Knowles hoped that sexes might be equal in ... ext. Boswell reproved her by the remark already quote... that men might as well expect to be equal to angels. He ...nforces this view by an illustration suggested by the Rev. Mr. Brown of Utrecht," who had observed that a ...reat or small glass might be equally full, though not ...olding equal quantities. Mr. Brown intended this for a ...nfutation of Hume, who has said that a little Miss, ...ressed for a ball, may be as happy as an orator who has ...on some triumphant success.[1]

The conversation thus took a theological turn, and ...rs. Knowles was fortunate enough to win Johnson's ...igh approval. He defended a doctrine maintained by ...oame Jenyns, that friendship is *not* a Christian virtue. ...rs. Knowles remarked that Jesus had twelve disciples,

[1] Boswell remarks as a curious coincidence that the same illus...tion had been used by a *Dr. King, a dissenting minister.* ...oubtless it has been used often enough. *For one instance see* ...nne's *Sermons* (Alford's Edition), vol. i., p. 5.

but there was one whom he loved

Johnson,

upon free will and necessity, up
was much given to worry himself.
s Johnson wrote to him, in answer
tions: "I hoped you had got rid of
misery. What have you to do with
? Or what more than to hold your
tongue about it?" Boswell could never take this sensible advice; but he got little comfort from his oracle. "We know that we are all free, and there's an end on't," was his statement on one occasion, and now he could only say, "All theory is against the freedom of the will, and all experience for it."

Some familiar topics followed, which play a great part in Boswell's reports. Among the favourite topics of the sentimentalists of the day was the denunciation of "luxury," and of civilized life in general. There was a disposition to find in the South Sea savages or American Indians an embodiment of the fancied state of nature. Johnson heartily despised the affectation. He was told of an American woman who had to be bound in order to keep her from savage life. "She must have been an animal, a beast," said Boswell. "Sir," said Johnson, "she was a speaking cat." Somebody quoted

[illegible] wles, [illegible] seized on the soliloquy of an officer who [illegible] America: "Here am I, free and [illegible] the rude magnificence of nature, with [illegible] better [illegible] and this gun, with [illegible]

[illegible] ch I. [illegible] and [illegible] city!" W[illegible] his mind of ca[illegible] ing a serious d[illegible] which he hate[illegible] article an admi[illegible]

On the prese[illegible] said that he ha[illegible] cynic, in whor[illegible] gerated into a general disbelief in real as well as sham nobleness of sentiment. As the conversation proceeded, Johnson expressed his habitual horror of death, and caused Miss Seward's ridicule by talking seriously of ghosts and the importance of the question of their reality; and then followed an explosion, which seems to have closed this characteristic evening. A young woman had become a Quaker under the influence of Mrs. Knowles, who now proceeded to deprecate Johnson's wrath at what he regarded as an apostasy. "Madam," he said, "she is an odious wench," and he proceeded to denounce her audacity in presuming to choose a religion for herself. "She knew no more of the points of difference," he said, "than of the difference between the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems." When Mrs. Knowles said that she

had the New Testa
the "most difficult
to attack the unluck
ladies. M
It conve
ion weve
of of
onfuted
rs. Knowl

m's manner, excep
are chiefly curious
superior powers.
gree, is that John-
les's hope that he
her world, retorted
that he was not fond of meeting fools anywhere.

Poor Boswell was at this time a water-drinker by Johnson's recommendation, though unluckily for himself he never broke off his drinking habits for long. They had a conversation at Paoli's, in which Boswell argued against his present practice. Johnson remarked "that wine gave a man nothing, but only put in motion what had been locked up in frost." It was a key, suggested some one, which opened a box, but the box might be full or empty. "Nay, sir," said Johnson, "conversation is the key, wine is a picklock, which forces open the box and injures it. A man should cultivate his mind, so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine which wine gives." Boswell characteristically said that the great difficulty was from "benevolence." It was hard to refuse "a good, worthy man" who asked you to try his cellar. This, according

The … conceit, implying an exaggerated … importance to your entertainer. Reynolds … up the opposite side, and produced the … Johnsonian blush. … replied … with you," said Johnson … member … to be elevated … drank wi… for his … "I should have thought so in…"

…

at a dinner at Reynolds's, that the poor discipl… away for a week. They made it up when the… next, and Johnson solaced Boswell's wounded vanit… highly commending an image made by him to exp… his feelings. "I don't care how often or how hig… Johnson tosses me, when only friends are present, for the… I fall upon soft ground; but I do not like falling o… stones, which is the case when enemies are present." The phrase may recall one of Johnson's happiest illustrations. When some one said in his presence that a *congé d'élire* might be considered as only a strong recommendation: "Sir," replied Johnson, "it is such a recommendation as if I should throw you out of a two-pair of stairs window, and recommend you to fall soft."

It is perhaps time to cease these extracts from Boswell's reports. The next two years were less fruitful. In 1779 Boswell was careless, though twice in London, and in 1780, he did not pay his annual visit. Boswell has partly filled up the gap by a collection of sayings made by Langton, some passages from which have been quoted, and his correspondence gives various details. Garrick died in January of 1779, and Beauclerk in

CHAPTER V.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF JOHNSON'S LIFE.

N following Boswell's guidance we have necessaril only one side of Johnson's life; and probably tha which had least significance for the man himself.

Boswell saw in him chiefly the great dictator of co sation; and though the reports of Johnson's talk repre his character in spite of some qualifications with unusual fulness, there were many traits very inadequately revealed at the Mitre or the Club, at Mrs. Thrale's, or in meetings with Wilkes or Reynolds. We may catch some glimpses from his letters and diaries of that inward life which consisted generally in a long succession of struggles against an oppressive and often paralysing melancholy. Another most noteworthy side to his character is revealed in his relations to persons too humble for admission to the tables at which he exerted a despotic sway. Upon this side Johnson was almost entirely loveable. We often have to regret the imperfection of the records of

> That best portion of a good man's life,
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love

Everywhere in Johnson's letters and in the occasional anecdotes, we come upon indications of a tenderness and untiring benevolence which would make us forgive

far worse faults tha
Nay, the very asp
leared to us by t
self agai
It
ciful
ion
of
w Jol
nted the loss of a first cousin killed in A
thee, my dear,' said he, 'have done with can
would the world be the worse for it, I may ask, i
relations were at once spitted like larks and roasted
Presto's supper?' Presto was the dog that lay under
table while we talked." The counter version, given
Boswell is, that Mrs. Thrale related her cousin's death

very little concern if all your relations were spitted like those larks, and roasted for Presto's supper." Taking the most unfavourable version, we may judge how much real indifference to human sorrow was implied by seeing how Johnson was affected by a loss of one of his humblest friends. It is but one case of many. In 1767, he took leave, as he notes in his diary, of his "dear old friend, Catherine Chambers," who had been for about forty-three *years in the service of his family.* "*I desired all to withdraw,*" he says, "then told her that we were to part for ever, and, as Christians, we should part with prayer, and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me, and held up her poor hands as she lay in bed, with great fervour, while I prayed, kneeling by her, in nearly the following words"—which shall not be repeated here—"I then kissed her," he adds. "She told me that to part was the greatest pain

[illegible] and that she hoped we should meet [illegible] I expressed, with swelled eyes, [illegible] emotion of kindness, the same hopes. We [illegible] hope to meet again [illegible] with so true and tender a h[illegible] his [illegible], what with some men would be a m[illegible] [illegible] sympathy, that he "hated to hear people [illegible] metaphysical distresses when there was so much [illegible] hunger in the world." [illegible] contempt for all affectation [illegible] pose, said Boswell to him, [illegible] Baretti was lying under a ch[illegible] your intimate friends were ap[illegible] which he might be hanged." [illegible] replied Johnson, "to bail hi[illegible] assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged, I should not suffer." "Would you eat your dinner that day, sir?" asks Boswell. "Yes, sir; and eat it as if he were eating with me. Why there's Baretti, who's to be tried for his life to-morrow. Friends have risen up for him upon every side; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plum-pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind." Boswell illustrated the subject by saying that Tom Davies had just written a letter to Foote, telling him that he could not sleep from concern about Baretti, and at the same time recommending a young man who kept a pickle-shop. Johnson summed up by the remark: "You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*." Johnson never objected to feeling, but to the waste of feeling.

In a similar vein he told Mrs. Thrale that a "surly fel-

[illegible] te at night, he found a poor woman [illegible] He carried her to his house on his [illegible] found that she was reduced to the lowest stage [illegible] verty [illegible] disease. He took care of h[illegible] [illegible], with all [illegible] less, until she w[illegible] ber [illegible] and tried to have her put into a vi[illegible] his [illegible] His house, in his later years, wa[illegible] [illegible] waifs and strays, to whom he gave hosp[illegible] [illegible] times support, defending himself by saying that [illegible] [illegible] not help them nobody else would. The head [illegible] household was Miss Williams, who had been a frien[illegible] his wife's, and after coming to stay with him, in orde[illegible] undergo an operation for cataract, became a perma[illegible] inmate of his house. She had a small income of so[illegible] 40*l.* a year, partly from the charity of connexions of he[illegible] father's, and partly arising from a little book of miscellanies published by subscription. She was a woman of some sense and cultivation, and when she died (in 1783) Johnson said that for thirty years she had been to him as a sister. Boswell's jealousy was excited during the first period of his acquaintance, when Goldsmith one night went home with Johnson, crying "I go to Miss Williams" —a phrase which implied admission to an intimacy from which Boswell was as yet excluded. Boswell soon obtained the coveted privilege, and testifies to the respect with which Johnson always treated the inmates of his family. Before leaving her to dine with Boswell at the hotel, he asked her what little delicacy should be sent to her from the tavern. Poor Miss Williams, however, was peevish, and, according to Hawkins, had been known to drive Johnson out of the room by her reproaches, and Boswell's delicacy was shocked by the supposition that she tested the fulness of cups of tea, by putting her finger inside. We are

glad to know that this was ... fact, Miss Williams, however ... circumstances, seems to have been a lady by ... ation.

It ... inmate of this ... household ... ion ... n who had been a waiter at a coff... of ... ated by surgeons. They had enabl... ome of their art, and he set up as an "... tiser in physic amongst the lower people" in L... ook from them such fees as he could get, incl... isions, sometimes, unfortunately for him, of ... able kind. He was once entrapped into a queer mar... ge, and Johnson had to arrange a separation from his ... fe. Johnson, it seems, had a good opinion of his medical skill, and more or less employed his services in that capacity. He attended his patron at his breakfast; breakfasting, said Percy, "on the crust of a roll, which Johnson threw to him after tearing out the crumb." The phrase, it is said, goes too far; Johnson always took pains that Levett should be treated rather as a friend than as a dependant.

Besides these humble friends, there was a Mrs. Desmoulins, the daughter of a Lichfield physician. Johnson had had some quarrel with the father in his youth for revealing a confession of the mental disease which tortured him from early years He supported Mrs Desmoul... ... to a twelfth part of his pension. Francis Barber has already been mentioned, and we have a dim vision of a Miss Carmichael, who completed what he facetiously called his "seraglio." It was anything but a happy family. He summed up their relations in a letter

[illegible] Williams," he says, "hates everybody; [illegible] oulins, and does not love Williams; [illegible] hates them both; Poll (Miss Carmichael) [illegible] of them." Frank Barber complained of [illegible] uthority, and [illegible] s Williams of F[illegible] d [illegible] on. Intruders who had taken [illegible] ber [illegible] his [illegible] brought their children there in his [illegible] [illegible] d if their dinners were ill-dressed. The [illegible] [illegible] all, relieving himself by an occasional growl, [illegible] aching any who ventured to join in the grow[illegible] [illegible] eir indifference to the sufferings of poverty. Le[illegible] died in January, 1782; Miss Williams died, after a ling[illegible] ing illness, in 1783, and Johnson grieved in solitude [illegible] the loss of his testy companions. A poem, compose[illegible] upon Levett's death, records his feelings in language which wants the refinement of Goldsmith or the intensity of Cowper's pathos, but which is yet so sincere and tender as to be more impressive than far more elegant compositions. It will be a fitting close to this brief indication of one side of Johnson's character, too easily overlooked in Boswell's pages, to quote part of what Thackeray truly calls the "sacred verses" upon Levett:—

> Well tried through many a varying year
>   See Levett to the grave descend,
> Officious, innocent, sincere,
>   Of every friendless name the friend.
>
> In misery's darkest cavern known,
>   His ready help was ever nigh;
> Where hopeless anguish pour'd his groan,
>   And lonely want retired to die.
>
> No summons mock'd by dull delay,
>   No petty gains disdain'd by pride;
> The modest wants of every day,
>   The toil of every day supplied.

It [illegible]

[illegible] pain,
[illegible]y,
[illegible] chain,
[illegible]est way.

[illegible] of the country tomb-
[illegible]l to realize the deep,
[illegible] without tears in one's
eyes is to me at least impossible.

There is one little touch which may be added before we proceed to the closing years of this tender-hearted old moralist. Johnson loved little children, calling them "little dears," and cramming them with sweetmeats, though we regret to add that he once snubbed a little child rather severely for a want of acquaintance with the *Pilgrim's Progress* His cat, Hodge, should be famous amongst the lovers of the race. He used to go out and buy oysters for Hodge, that the servants might not take a dislike to the animal from having to serve it themselves. He reproached his wife for beating a cat before the maid, lest she should give a precedent for cruelty. Boswell, who cherished an antipathy to cats, suffered at seeing Hodge scrambling up Johnson's breast, whilst he smiled and rubbed the beast's back and pulled its tail. Bozzy remarked that he was a fine cat. "Why, yes, sir," said Johnson; "but I have had cats whom I liked better

n, lest Hodge should be put out of
he added, "but he is a very fine cat, a very
deed." He told Langton once of a young
vho, when last heard of, was "runnin
ng cats; but, e murmured in ber
Hodge shan't be shot; no, no, his
shot!" Once, when Johnson was st
in Wales, the gardener brought in a hare which
caught in the potatoes. The order was given
e it to the cook. Johnson asked to have it place
nis arms. He
ing to increase
that he had pe
by insisting that the rights of hospitality included an animal which had thus placed itself under the protection of the master of the garden.

We must proceed, however, to a more serious event. The year 1781 brought with it a catastrophe which profoundly affected the brief remainder of Johnson's life. Mr. Thrale, whose health had been shaken by fits, died suddenly on the 4th of April. The ultimate consequence was Johnson's loss of the second home, in which he had so often found refuge from melancholy, alleviation of physical suffering, and pleasure in social converse. The change did not follow at once, but as the catastrophe of a little social drama, upon the rights and wrongs of which a good deal of controversy has been expended.

Johnson was deeply affected by the loss of a friend whose face, as he said, "had never been turned upon him through fifteen years but with respect and benignity." He wrote solemn and affecting letters to the widow, and busied himself strenuously in her service. Thrale had made him one of his executors, leaving him a small

legacy; and Johnson took, it seems, [illegible] felt [illegible] th[illegible] minded pleasure in dealing with impo[illegible] [illegible] affairs and signing cheques for large sums of mo[illegible] [illegible] of letters, to whom three hundred a[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]ndi[illegible] [illegible]real [illegible] ing[illegible] [illegible] brew[illegible] [illegible] with ar[illegible] [illegible]ed what[illegible] [illegible]gniloquent[illegible] and vats, but [illegible] [illegible]e dreams of [illegible] to Barclay, [illegible] l., and some [illegible] the kind in the world.

The first effect of the change was probably rather to tighten than to relax the bond of union with the Thrale family. During the winter of 1781-2, Johnson's infirmities were growing upon him. In the beginning of 1782 he was suffering from an illness which excited serious apprehensions, and he went to Mrs Thrale's, as the only house where he could use "all the freedom that sickness requires." She nursed him carefully, and expressed her feelings with characteristic vehemence in a curious journal which he had encouraged her to keep. It records her opinions about her affairs and her family, with a frankness remarkable even in writing intended for no eye but her own. "Here is Mr. Johnson very ill," she writes on the 1st of February; .... "What shall we do for him? If I lose *him*, I am more than undone—friend, father, guardian, confidant! God give me health and patience! What shall I do?" There is no reason to

[illegible] of these sentiments, though they seem [illegible] a mood of excitement. They show that fo[illegible] [illegible]s after Thrale's death Mrs. Thrale was keenly [illegible]

[illegible] per [illegible] is [illegible] musician named Piozzi, a man of a[illegible] [illegible]rable character, making an independent incom[illegible] [illegible] profession, but to the eyes of most people rathe[illegible] [illegible]nsive than specially attractive. [illegible] Mrs. Thrale and Piozzi rapidly beca[illegible] end of 1781 she was on very inti[illegible] gentleman whom she calls "my P[illegible] making a professional trip to the Continent during part of the period since her husband's death, and upon his return in November, Johnson congratulated her upon having two friends who loved her, in terms which suggest no existing feeling of jealousy. During 1782 the mutual affection of the lady and the musician became stronger, and in the autumn they had avowed it to each other, and were discussing the question of marriage.

No one who has had some experience of life will be inclined to condemn Mrs. Thrale for her passion. Rather the capacity for a passion not excited by an intrinsically unworthy object should increase our esteem for her. Her marriage with Thrale had been, as has been said, one of convenience; and, though she bore him many children and did her duty faithfully, she never loved him. Towards the end of his life he had made her jealous by very marked attentions to the pretty and sentimental Sophy Streatfield, which once caused a scene at his table; and during the last two years his mind had been weakened, and his conduct had caused her anxiety and discomfort

... old story of ...
of ... Nor was ...
... self. Piozzi was ...
marry him was in a ...
... just growing into ...
... first duty to protect. The marriage, therefore, might ... regarded as not merely a revolt against conventional ...

herself that the objections were founded upon something more weighty than a fear of the world's censure.

Johnson, in particular, among whose virtues one cannot reckon a superiority to British prejudice, would inevitably consider the marriage as simply degrading. Foreseeing this, and wishing to avoid the pain of rejecting advice which she felt unable to accept, she refrained from retaining her "friend, father, and guardian" in the position of "confidant." Her situation in the summer of 1782 was therefore exceedingly trying. She was unhappy at home. Her children, she complains, did not love her; her servants "devoured" her; her friends censured her; and her expenses were excessive, whilst the loss of a lawsuit strained her resources. Johnson, sickly, suffering and descending into the gloom of approaching decay, was present like a charged thunder-cloud ready to burst at any moment, if she allowed him to approach the chief

...oughts. Though not in love with Mrs. ...nd a very intelligible feeling of jealousy ... one who threatened to distract her allegiance. ...ch circumstances we might expect the s... ...ch Miss Burney described long a...r ...ith some confusion of dates). M... ...s, was absent and agitated, restless in ... ...urried in speech, forcing smiles, and averting ... from her friends; neglecting every one, includ... ...nson and excepting only Miss Burney herself, whom the secret was confided, and the situation therefo... explained. Gradually, according to Miss Burney, sh... became more petulant to Johnson than she was hersel... aware, gave palpable hints of being worried by his company, and finally excited his resentment and suspicion. In one or two utterances, though he doubtless felt the expedience of reserve, he intrusted his forebodings to Miss Burney, and declared that Streatham was lost to him for ever.

At last, in the end of August, the crisis came. Mrs. Thrale's lawsuit had gone against her. She thought it desirable to go abroad and save money. It had moreover been "long her dearest wish" to see Italy, with Piozzi for a guide The one difficulty (as she says in her journal at the time), was that it seemed equally hard to part with Johnson or to take him with her till he had regained strength. At last, however she took courage to confide to him her plans for travel. To her extreme annoyance he fully approved of them. He advised her to go; anticipated her return in two or three years; and told her daughter that he should not accompany them, even if invited. No behaviour, it may be admitted, could be more provoking than this unforeseen reasonableness. To

nerve oneself to part with a friend [illegible] the friend perfectly ready, and all your batt[illegible] ment thrown away is most vexatious. The [illegible] have begged her to stay with him, or to t[illegible] It [illegible] he should have [illegible]lo the scene [illegible] ion [illegible] dread, but which wo[illegible] of [illegible]r power. The only c[illegible] have satisfied her—though sh[illegible] know it—would have been an [illegible] justified a rupture, and allowe[illegible] his tyranny as she now proceeded to protest against his complacency.

Johnson wished to go to Italy two years later; and his present willingness to be left was probably caused by a growing sense of the dangers which threatened their friendship. Mrs. Thrale's anger appears in her journal. He had never really loved her, she declares, his affection for her had been interested, though even in her wrath she admits that he really loved her husband; he cared less for her conversation, which she had fancied necessary to his existence, than for her "roast beef and plumb pudden," which he now devours too "dirtily for endurance." She was fully resolved to go, and yet she could not bear that her going should fail to torture the friend whom for eighteen years she had loved and cherished so kindly.

No one has a right at once to insist upon the compliance of his friends, and to insist that it should be a painful compliance. Still Mrs. Thrale's petulant outburst was natural enough. It requires notice because her subsequent account of the rupture has given rise to attacks on Johnson's character. Her "Anecdotes," written in 1785, show that her real affection for Johnson was still coloured

[illegible] for his conduct at this and a later period. [illegible] apologetic character which shows itself in a [illegible] as to the origin of the quarrel, curiously [illegible] from the contemporary accounts in th[illegible] substantially, an[illegible] the whole book is [illegible] probability to the assertion, tha[illegible]iness and demands upon her indulgence [illegible]lerable, when he was no longer under restrain[illegible] husband's presence. She therefore "took advant[illegible] her lost lawsuit and other troubles to leave Lon[illegible] and thus escape from his domestic tyranny. He no longer, as she adds, suffered from anything but "old age and general infirmity" (a tolerably wide exception!), and did not require her nursing. She therefore withdrew from the yoke to which she had contentedly submitted during her husband's life, but which was intolerable when her "coadjutor was no more."

Johnson's society was, we may easily believe, very trying to a widow in such a position; and it seems to be true that Thrale was better able than Mrs. Thrale to restrain his oddities, little as the lady shrunk at times from reasonable plain-speaking. But the later account involves something more than a bare suppression of the truth. The excuse about his health is, perhaps, the worst part of her case, because obviously insincere. Nobody could be more fully aware than Mrs. Thrale that Johnson's infirmities were rapidly gathering, and that another winter or two must in all probability be fatal to him. She knew, therefore, that he was never more in want of the care which, as she seems to imply, had saved him from the specific tendency to something like madness. She knew, in fact, that she was throwing him upon the care of his other friends, zealous and affectionate enough, it is true,

but yet unable to suppl [illegible]
of Streatham. She c[illegible]
jury, inevitable it mig[illegible]
[illegible]ly not to be ext[illegible]

It [illegible]ed health. [illegible]
[illegible]ion [illegible]shed, she had not dared to speak re[illegible]
of [illegible]ecovery from a dangerous illness, which ha[illegible]
[illegible] at the time to the strongest [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] evil, which would "more than ruin her." Even when resolved to leave Streatham, her one great difficulty is the dread of parting with Johnson, and the pecuniary troubles are the solid and conclusive reason. In the later account the money question is the mere pretext; the desire to leave Johnson the true motive; and the long-cherished desire to see Italy with Piozzi is judiciously dropped out of notice altogether.

The truth is plain enough. Mrs. Thrale was torn by conflicting feelings. She still loved Johnson, and yet dreaded his certain disapproval of her strongest wishes. She respected him, but was resolved not to follow his advice. She wished to treat him with kindness and to be repaid with gratitude, and yet his presence and his affection were full of intolerable inconveniences. When an old friendship becomes a burden, the smaller infirmities of manner and temper to which we once submitted willingly become intolerable. She had borne with Johnson's mode of eating and with his rough reproofs to herself and her friends during sixteen years of her married life; and for nearly a year of her widowhood she still clung to him as the wisest and kindest of monitors. His manners had undergone no spasmodic change. They became intolerable

... reasons, she resented his possible inter... wanted a very different guardian and con... and, therefore, she wished to part, and yet wished ... initiative should come from him.

...ecision to leave S...eatham was taken. ... ...ith deep regret from the house; he rea... ...e Testament in the library; he took l... ...urch with a kiss; he composed a prayer comm... ...e family to the protection of Heaven; and he did ... forget to note in his journal the details of the last d... of which he partook. This quaint observation may have been due to some valetudinary motive, or, more probably, to some odd freak of association. Once, when eating an omelette, he was deeply affected because it recalled his old friend Nugent. "Ah, my dear friend," he said "in an agony," "I shall never eat omelette with thee again!" And in the present case there is an obscure reference to some funeral connected in his mind with a meal. The unlucky entry has caused some ridicule, but need hardly convince us that his love of the family in which for so many years he had been an honoured and honour-giving inmate was, as Miss Seward amiably suggests, in great measure "kitchen-love."

No immediate rupture followed the abandonment of the Streatham establishment. Johnson spent some weeks at Brighton with Mrs Thrale, during which a crisis was taking place, without his knowledge, in her relations to Piozzi. After vehement altercations with her daughters, whom she criticizes with great bitterness for their utter want of heart, she resolved to break with Piozzi for at least a time. Her plan was to go to Bath, and there to retrench her expenses, in the hopes of being able to recall her lover at some future period. Meanwhile he left her

and returned to Italy.
during which Johnson
house, she went to B
. A melancholy p
It le lost a you
ion roke in June. Death was sending pre
of A correspondence was kept up, which
s were not ostensibly broken. Mrs
more than once; and Johnson's letter
etails with his customary plainness of
asionally indulges in laments over the supposed change in her feelings. The gloom is thickening, and the old playful gallantry has died out. The old man evidently felt himself deserted, and suffered from the breaking-up of the asylum he had loved so well. The final catastrophe came in 1784, less than six month before Johnson's death.

After much suffering in mind and body, Mrs. Thral had at last induced her daughters to consent to her mar riage with Piozzi. She sent for him at once, and the were married in June, 1784. A painful correspondenc followed. Mrs. Thrale announced her marriage in friendly letter to Johnson, excusing her previous silenc on the ground that discussion could only have cause them pain. The revelation, though Johnson could n have been quite unprepared, produced one of his bursts fury. "Madam, if I interpret your letter rightly," wro the old man, "you are ignominiously married. If it yet undone, let us once more talk together. If you ha abandoned your children and your religion, God forgive your wickedness! If you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly do no further mischief! If the last act is yet to do, I, who have loved you, esteemed

...d you, and served you—I, who long thought ... of womankind—entreat that before your fate ...ocable, I may once more see you! I was, I once ...dam, most truly yours, Sam. Johnson."

...Thrale replied with spirit and dignity t... ... indignation, speaking of her husban... ...ng pride, and resenting the unfortunate p... ...r loss of "fame." She ended by declining ... intercourse till Johnson could change his opinion... Piozzi. Johnson admitted in his reply that he had ... right to resent her conduct; expressed his gratitude for the kindness which had "soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched," and implored her ("superfluously," as she says) to induce Piozzi to settle in England. He then took leave of her with an expression of sad forebodings. Mrs. Thrale, now Mrs. Piozzi, says that she replied affectionately; but the letter is missing. The friendship was broken off, and during the brief remainder of Johnson's life, the Piozzis were absent from England.

Of her there is little more to be said. After passing some time in Italy, where she became a light of that wretched little Della Cruscan society of which some faint memory is preserved by Gifford's ridicule, now pretty nearly forgotten with its objects, she returned with her husband to England. Her anecdotes of Johnson, published soon after his death, had a success which, in spite of much ridicule, encouraged her to some further literary efforts of a sprightly but ephemeral kind. She lived happily with Piozzi, and never had cause to regret her marriage. She was reconciled to her daughters sufficiently to renew a friendly intercourse; but the elder ones set up a separate establishment. Piozzi died not long afterwards. She was still a vivacious old lady, who celebrated

her 80th birthday by a ball, and is supposed [illegible] th
age to have made an offer of marriage to a [illegible]
She died in May, 1821, leaving all that she could [illegible]
[illegible] nephew of Piozzi's, who had been natu[illegible]

It [illegible]d.

[illegible] ion [illegible]le Johnson was rapidly approaching th[illegible]
of [illegible]mates, Levett and Miss Williams, had [illegible]
[illegible] him; Goldsmith and Garrick and Beauclerk ha[illegible]
[illegible]me memories of the past, and the gloom gathere[illegible] [illegible]kly around him. The old man clung to life with pathetic earnestness. Though life had been often melancholy, he never affected to conceal the horror with which he regarded death. He frequently declared that death must be dreadful to every reasonable man. "Death, my dear, is very dreadful," he says simply in a letter to Lucy Porter in the last year of his life. Still later he shocked a pious friend by admitting that the fear oppressed him. Dr. Adams tried the ordinary consolation of the divine goodness, and went so far as to suggest that hell might not imply much positive suffering. Johnson's religious views were of a different colour. "I am afraid," he said, "I may be one of those who shall be damned." "What do you mean by damned?" asked Adams. Johnson replied passionately and loudly, "Sent to hell, sir, and punished everlastingly." Remonstrances only deepened his melancholy, and he silenced his friends by exclaiming in gloomy agitation, "I'll have no more on't!" Often in these last years he was heard muttering to himself the passionate complaint of Claudio, "Ah, but to die and go we know not whither!" At other times he was speaking of some lost friend, and saying, "Poor man—and then he died!" The peculiar horror of death, which seems to indicate a tinge of insanity, was combined with utter

of pain. He called to the surgeons to cut when performing a painful operation, and shortly his death inflicted such wounds upon himself in of obtaining relief as, very erroneously, to of suicide. Whilst his strength rem oured to disperse melancholy by some ods. In the winter of 1783-4 he got to w surviving members of the old Ivy Lane Club, w had flourished when he was composing the *Dictiona* but the old place of meeting had vanished, most of the original members were dead, and the gathering can have been but melancholy. He started another club at the Essex Head, whose members were to meet twice a week, with the modest fine of threepence for non-attendance. It appears to have included a rather "strange mixture" of people, and thereby to have given some scandal to Sir John Hawkins and even to Reynolds. They thought that his craving for society, increased by his loss of Streatham, was leading him to undignified concessions.

Amongst the members of the club, however, were such men as Horsley and Windham. Windham seems to have attracted more personal regard than most politicians, by a generous warmth of enthusiasm not too common in the class. In politics he was an ardent disciple of Burke's, whom he afterwards followed in his separation from the new Whigs. But, though adhering to the principles which Johnson detested, he knew, like his preceptor, how to win Johnson's warmest regard. He was the most eminent of the younger generation who now looked up to Johnson as a venerable relic from the past. Another was young Burke, that very priggish and silly young man as he seems to have been, whose loss, none the less, broke the tender heart of his father. Friendships, now more in-

teresting, were those with two of the most ... authoresses of the day. One of them was Hannah ... who was about this time coming to the conclusion ...

her that he said, according to Mrs. Thrale, though Boswell reports a softened version of the remark, that she should "consider what her flattery was worth, before she choked him with it." More frequently, he seems to have repaid it in kind. "There was no name in poetry," he said, "which might not be glad to own her poem"—the *Bas Bleu.* Certainly Johnson did not stick at trifles in intercourse with his female friends. He was delighted, shortly before his death, to "gallant it about" with her at Oxford, and in serious moments showed a respectful regard for her merits. Hannah More, who thus sat at the feet of Johnson, encouraged the juvenile ambition of Macaulay, and did not die till the historian had grown into manhood and fame. The other friendship noticed was with Fanny Burney, who also lived to our own time. Johnson's affection for this daughter of his friend seems to have been amongst the tenderest of his old age. When she was first introduced to him at the Thrales, she was overpowered and indeed had her head a little turned by flattery of the most agreeable kind that an author can receive. The "great literary Leviathan" showed himself to have the recently published *Evelina* at his fingers' ends. He quoted, and almost acted passages. "La! Polly!" he exclaimed in a

...e accent, "only think! Miss has danced with ... How many modern readers can assign its place ...nt quotation, or answer the question which poor ...well asked in despair and amidst general ridic... ...orance, "What is 'Brangton?" Ther... ...pleasant in the enthusiasm with which ...nson and Burke welcomed the literary ach... ...f the young lady, whose first novels seem to have m... a sensation almost as lively as that produced by M... Brontë, and far superior to anything that fell to the lot of Miss Austen. Johnson seems always to have regarded her with personal affection. He had a tender interview with her shortly before his death; he begged her with solemn energy to remember him in her prayers; he apologized pathetically for being unable to see her, as his weakness increased; and sent her tender messages from his deathbed.

As the end drew near, Johnson accepted the inevitable like a man. After spending most of the latter months of 1784 in the country with the friends who, after the loss of the Thrales, could give him most domestic comfort, he came back to London to die. He made his will, and settled a few matters of business, and was pleased to be told that he would be buried in Westminster Abbey. He uttered a few words of solemn advice to those who came near him, and took affecting leave of his friends. Langton, so warmly loved, was in close attendance. Johnson said to him tenderly, *Te teneam moriens deficiente manu.* Windham broke from political occupations to sit by the dying man Once Langton found Burke sitting by his bedside with three or four friends. "I am afraid," said Burke, "that so many of us must be oppressive to you." "No, sir, it is not so," replied Johnson, "and I must be

in a wretched state indeed when your com[illegible] th[illegible] not be a delight to me." "My dear sir," said [illegible] with a breaking voice, "you have always been too [illegible] [illegible]," and parted from his old friend for the last [illegible]. It [illegible]lds, he begged three things: to forgive a [illegible] [illegible]ion [illegible]nds, to read the Bible, and never to pa[illegible] of [illegible]. A few flashes of the old humour broke through [illegible] said of a man who sat up with him: "Sir, the [illegible]ow's an idiot; he's as awkward as a turnspit when first put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse." His last recorded words were to a young lady who had begged for his blessing: "God bless you, my dear." The same day, December 13th, 1784, he gradually sank and died peacefully. He was laid in the Abbey, and the playful prediction which he made to Goldsmith has been amply fulfilled:—

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.

The names of many greater writers are inscribed upon the walls of Westminster Abbey; but scarcely any one lies there whose heart was more acutely responsive during life to the deepest and tenderest of human emotions. In visiting that strange gathering of departed heroes and statesmen and philanthropists and poets, there are many whose words and deeds have a far greater influence upon our imaginations; but there are very few whom, when all has been said, we can love so heartily as Samuel Johnson.

CHAPTER VI.

JOHNSON'S WRITINGS.

It remains to speak of Johnson's position in literature. For reasons sufficiently obvious, few men whose lives have been devoted to letters for an equal period, have left behind them such scanty and inadequate remains. Johnson, as we have seen, worked only under the pressure of circumstances; a very small proportion of his latter life was devoted to literary employment. The working hours of his earlier years were spent for the most part in productions which can hardly be called literary. Seven years were devoted to the *Dictionary,* which, whatever its merits, could be a book only in the material sense of the word, and was of course destined to be soon superseded. Much of his hack-work has doubtless passed into oblivion, and though the ordinary relic-worship has gathered together fragments enough to fill twelve decent octavo volumes (to which may be added the two volumes of parliamentary reports), the part which can be called alive may be compressed into very moderate compass. Johnson may be considered as a poet, an essayist, a pamphleteer, a traveller, a critic, and a biographer. Among his poems, the two imitations of Juvenal, especially the *Vanity of Human Wishes,* and a minor fragment or two, probably deserve more respect than would be conceded

to them by adherents of modern schools. [illegible] ambitious work, *Irene*, can be read by men in w[illegible]e, sense of duty has been abnormally developed. A[illegible] [illegible]wo hundred and odd essays of the *Rambler*, the[illegible]ot [illegible] It [illegible]oportion which wi[illegible] deserve, but will h[illegible]real [illegible]ion [illegible]spectful attention. *Rasselas*, one of the p[illegible] of [illegible]tales popular in the last century, gives the essenc[illegible] [illegible]much of the *Rambler* in a different form, and to these [illegible]ay be added the essay upon Soame Jenyns, which deals with the same absorbing question of human happiness. The political pamphlets, and the *Journey to the Hebrides*, have a certain historical interest; but are otherwise readable only in particular passages. Much of his criticism is pretty nearly obsolete; but the child of his old age—the *Lives of the Poets*—a book in which criticism and biography are combined, is an admirable performance in spite of serious defects. It is the work that best reflects his mind, and intelligent readers who have once made its acquaintance, will be apt to turn it into a familiar companion.

If it is easy to assign the causes which limited the quantity of Johnson's work, it is more curious to inquire what was the quality which once gained for it so much authority, and which now seems to have so far lost its savour. The peculiar style which is associated with Johnson's name must count for something in both processes. The mannerism is strongly marked, and of course offensive; for by "mannerism," as I understand the word, is meant the repetition of certain forms of language in obedience to blind habit and without reference to their propriety in the particular case. Johnson's sentences seem to be contorted, as his gigantic limbs used to twitch, by a kind of mechanical spasmodic

[illegible] he most obvious peculiarity is the tendency, [illegible] he noticed himself, to "use too big words and too [illegible] y of them." He had to explain to Miss Reynolds the Shakesperian line,—

> You must borrow me Garagantua's mouth,

[illegible] ad been applied to him because he used "b[illegible] which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce th[illegible] It was not, however, the mere bigness of the wo[illegible] that distinguished his style, but a peculiar love of putting the abstract for the concrete, of using awkward inversions, and of balancing his sentences in a monotonous rhythm, which gives the appearance, as it sometimes corresponds to the reality, of elaborate logical discrimination. With all its faults the style has the merits of masculine directness. The inversions are not such as to complicate the construction. As Boswell remarks, he never uses a parenthesis; and his style, though ponderous and wearisome, is as transparent as the smarter snipsnap of Macaulay.

This singular mannerism appears in his earliest writings; it is most marked at the time of the *Rambler;* whilst in the *Lives of the Poets,* although I think that the trick of inversion has become commoner, the other peculiarities have been so far softened as (in my judgment, at least), to be inoffensive. It is perhaps needless to give examples of a tendency which marks almost every page of his writing. A passage or two from the *Rambler* may illustrate the quality of the style, and the oddity of the effect produced, when it is applied to topics of a trivial kind. The author of the *Rambler* is supposed to receive a remonstrance upon his excessive gravity from the lively Flirtilla, who wishes him to write in defence of

masquerades. Conscious of his own in[illegible] applies to a man of "high reputation in gay li[illegible] no, on the fifth perusal of Flirtilla's letter breaks [illegible] rapture, and declares that he is ready to devote himself [illegible]

[illegible] which right and wrong may be confounded; b[illegible] which reason may be blinded, when we have a mind to escape from her inspection, and caprice and appetite instated in uncontrolled command and boundless dominion! Such a casuist may surely engage with certainty of success in vindication of an entertainment which in an instant gives confidence to the timorous and kindles ardour in the cold, an entertainment where the vigilance of jealousy has so often been clouded, and the virgin is set free from the necessity of languishing in silence; where all the outworks of chastity are at once demolished; where the heart is laid open without a blush; where bashfulness may survive virtue, and no wish is crushed under the frown of modesty."

Here is another passage, in which Johnson is speaking upon a topic more within his proper province; and which contains sound sense under its weight of words. A man, he says, who reads a printed book, is often contented to be pleased without critical examination. "But," he adds, "if the same man be called to consider the merit of a production yet unpublished, he brings an imagination heated with objections to passages which he has never yet heard; he invokes all the powers of criticism, and stores his memory with Taste and Grace, Purity and Delicacy, Manners and Unities, sounds which having been once uttered by those that understood

been since re-echoed without meaning, and to the disturbance of the world by constant ...ssion from one coxcomb to another. He con-... himself as obliged to show by some proof of his ...ces, that he is not consulted to no purpose ...re watches every opening for objection, an... ...k for every opportunity to propose some s... alteration. Such opportunities a very small degree ...sagacity will enable him to find, for in every work of imagination, the disposition of parts, the insertion of incidents, and use of decorations may be varied in a thousand ways with equal propriety; and, as in things nearly equal that will always seem best to every man which he himself produces, the critic, whose business is only to propose without the care of execution, can never want the satisfaction of believing that he has suggested very important improvements, nor the power of enforcing his advice by arguments, which, as they appear convincing to himself, either his kindness or his vanity will press obstinately and importunately, without suspicion that he may possibly judge too hastily in favour of his own advice or inquiry whether the advantage of the new scheme be proportionate to the labour." We may still notice a "repercussion" of words from one coxcomb to another; though somehow the words have been changed or translated.

Johnson's style is characteristic of the individual and of the epoch. The preceding generation had exhibited the final triumph of common sense over the pedantry of a decaying scholasticism. The movements represented by Locke's philosophy, by the rationalizing school in theology, and by the so-called classicism of Pope and his followers, are different phases of the same impulse. The quality

valued above all others in philosophy, literatu[illegible] th was clear, bright, common sense. To expel the [illegible] no, which had served as a cloak for charlatans was the [illegible] [illegible]m of the time, and the method was to appeal from [illegible] It[illegible]ors of exploded tech[illegible]calities to the judgme[illegible] real [illegible]ion [illegible]d men of the world. Berkeley places his Un[illegible] of [illegible]py climes,—

> Where nature guides, and virtue rules,
> *Where men shall not impose for truth and sense*
> *The pedantry of courts and schools.*

Simplicity, clearness, directness are, therefore, the great virtues of thought and style. Berkeley, Addison, Pope, and Swift are the great models of such excellence in various departments of literature.

In the succeeding generation we become aware of a certain leaven of dissatisfaction with the æsthetic and intellectual code thus inherited. The supremacy of common sense, the superlative importance of clearness, is still fully acknowledged, but there is a growing undertone of dissent in form and substance. Attempts are made to restore philosophical conceptions assailed by Locke and his followers; the rationalism of the deistic or semi-deistic writers is declared to be superficial; their optimistic theories disregard the dark side of nature, and provide no sufficient utterance for the sadness caused by the contemplation of human suffering; and the polished monotony of Pope's verses begins to fall upon those who shall tread in his steps. Some daring sceptics are even inquiring whether he is a poet at all. And simultaneously, though Addison is still a kind of sacred model, the best prose writers are beginning to aim at a more complex structure of sentence, fitted for the expression of a wider range of thought and emotion.

...., though no conscious revolutionist, shares this ...ing discontent. The *Spectator* is written in the lan... of the drawing-room and the coffee-house. Nothing ...ver said which might not pass in conversation betw... ...ple of "wits," with, at ...st, some graceful indu... ...ssing moods of solemn or tender sentiment. J... ...ough devoted to society in his own way, was an... but a producer of small talk. Society meant to him ... escape from the gloom which beset him whenever he was abandoned to his thoughts. Neither his education nor the manners acquired in Grub Street had qualified him to be an observer of those lighter foibles which were touched by Addison with so dexterous a hand. When he ventures upon such topics he flounders dreadfully, and rather reminds us of an artist who should attempt to paint miniatures with a mop. No man, indeed, took more of interest in what is called the science of human nature; and, when roused by the stimulus of argument, he could talk, as has been shown, with almost unrivalled vigour and point. But his favourite topics are the deeper springs of character, rather than superficial peculiarities; and his vigorous sayings are concentrated essence of strong sense and deep feeling, not dainty epigrams or graceful embodiments of delicate observation. Johnson was not, like some contemporary antiquarians, a systematic student ofthe English literature of the preceding centuries, but he had a strong affection for some of its chief masterpieces. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was, he declared, the only book which ever got him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished. Sir Thomas Browne was another congenial writer, who is supposed to have had some influence upon his style. He never seems to have directly imitated any one, though some nonsense has been talked about his

"forming a style;" but it is probable that he felt greater affinity to those old scholars, with their elaborate and ornate language and their deep and solemn tone of sentiment, than to the brilliant but comparatively superficial letters of Queen Anne's time. He was, one may say, a ...ion of the old type, forced by circumstances upon a later age, but always retaining a sympathy for the scholar's life and temper. Accordingly, his style acquired something of the old elaboration, though the attempt to conform to the canons of a later age renders the structure disagreeably monotonous. His tendency to pomposity is not redeemed by the *naïveté* and spontaneity of his masters.

The inferiority of Johnson's written to his spoken utterances is indicative of his divided life. There are moments at which his writing takes the terse, vigorous tone of his talk. In his letters, such as those to Chesterfield and Macpherson and in occasional passages of his pamphlets, we see that he could be pithy enough when he chose to descend from his Latinized abstractions to good concrete English; but that is only when he becomes excited. His face when in repose, we are told, appeared to be almost imbecile; he was constantly sunk in reveries, from which he was only roused by a challenge to conversation. In his writings, for the most part, we seem to be listening to the reverie rather than the talk; we are overhearing a soliloquy in his study, not a vigorous discussion over the twentieth cup of tea; he is not fairly put upon his mettle, and is content to expound without enforcing. We seem to see a man, heavy-eyed, ponderous in his gestures, like some huge mechanism which grinds out a ponderous tissue of verbiage as heavy as it is certainly solid.

The substance corresponds to the style. Johnson has

ing in common with the fashionable pessimism of
n times. No sentimentalist of to-day could be more
vinced that life is in the main miserable. It was his
vourite theory, according to Mrs. Thrale, that all human
n was prompted by the vacuity of life." Me
ly in the hope of escaping from themselves.
a follower of Schopenhauer would assert, is the pos
and good merely the negative of evil. All desire is bottom an attempt to escape from pain. The doctrine neither resulted from, nor generated, a philosophical theory in Johnson's case, and was in the main a generalization of his own experience. Not the less, the aim of most of his writing is to express this sentiment in one form or other. He differs, indeed, from most modern sentimentalists, in having the most hearty contempt for useless whining. If he dwells upon human misery, it is because he feels that it is as futile to join with the optimist in ignoring, as with the pessimist in howling over the evil. We are in a sad world, full of pain, but we have to make the best of it. Stubborn patience and hard work are the sole remedies, or rather the sole means of temporary escape. Much of the *Rambler* is occupied with variations upon this theme, and expresses the kind of dogged resolution with which he would have us plod through this weary world. Take for example this passage:—"The controversy about the reality of external evils is now at an end. That life has many miseries, and that those miseries are sometimes at least equal to all the powers of fortitude is now universally confessed; and, therefore, it is useful to consider not only how we may escape them, but by what means those which either the accidents of affairs or the infirmities of nature must bring upon us may be mitigated and

lightened, and how we may make those hours less wretched, which the condition of our present existence will not allow to be very happy.

"The cure for the greatest part of human miseries is not radical, but palliative. Infelicity is involved in corporeal [illegible]ion, and interwoven with our being; all attempts, therefore, to decline it wholly are useless and vain; the armies of pain send their arrows against us on every side, the choice is only between those which are more or less sharp, or tinged with poison of greater or less malignity; and the strongest armour which reason can supply will only blunt their points, but cannot repel them.

"The great remedy which Heaven has put in our hands is patience, by which, though we cannot lessen the torments of the body, we can in a great measure preserve the peace of the mind, and shall suffer only the natural and genuine force of an evil, without heightening its acrimony or prolonging its effects."

It is hardly desirable for a moralist to aim at originality in his precepts. We must be content if he enforces old truths in such a manner as to convince us of the depth and sincerity of his feeling. Johnson, it must be confessed, rather abuses the moralist's privilege of being commonplace. He descants not unfrequently upon propositions so trite that even the most earnest enforcement can give them little interest. With all drawbacks, however, the moralizing is the best part of the *Rambler*. Many of the papers follow the precedent set by Addison in the *Spectator*, but without Addison's felicity. Like Addison, he indulges in allegory, which, in his hands, becomes unendurably frigid and clumsy; he tries light social satire, and is fain to confess that we can spy a beard under the muffler of his feminine characters; he

t[illegible] us to criticism which, like Addison's, goes upon exploded principles, but unlike Addison's, is apt to be almost wilfully outrageous. His odd remarks upon Milton's versification are the worst example of this weakness. The result is what [illegible]e might expect from [illegible] attempt of a writer without an ear to sit in jud[illegible] upon the greatest master of harmony in the language.

These defects have consigned the *Rambler* to th[illegible] dustiest shelves of libraries, and account for the wonder expressed by such a critic as M. Taine at the English love of Johnson. Certainly if that love were nourished, as he seems to fancy, by assiduous study of the *Rambler*, it would be a curious phenomenon. And yet with all its faults, the reader who can plod through its pages will at least feel respect for the author. It is not unworthy of the man whose great lesson is "clear your mind of cant;"[1] who felt most deeply the misery of the world, but from the bottom of his heart despised querulous and sentimental complaints on one side, and optimist glasses upon the other. To him, as to some others of his temperament, the affectation of looking at the bright side of things seems to have presented itself as the bitterest of mockeries; and nothing would tempt him to let fine words pass themselves off for genuine sense. Here are some remarks upon the vanity in which some authors seek for consolation, which may illustrate this

[1] Of this well-known sentiment it may be said, as of some other familiar quotations, that its direct meaning has been slightly modified in use. The emphasis is changed. Johnson's words were "Clear your *mind* of cant. You may talk as other people do; you may say to a man, sir, I am your humble servant; you are *not* his most humble servant. . . . You may *talk* in this manner; it is a mode of talking in society; but don't *think* foolishly."

to literature very few extend their views beyond some particular science, and the greater part seldom inquire, even in their own profession, for any authors but those whom the present mode of study happens to force upon their notice; they desire not to fill their minds with unfashionable knowledge, but contentedly resign to oblivion those books which they now find censured or neglected."

The most remarkable of Johnson's utterances upon his favourite topic of the Vanity of Human Wishes is the story of *Rasselas*. The plan of the book is simple, and recalls certain parts of Voltaire's simultaneous but incomparably more brilliant attack upon Optimism in *Candide*. There is supposed to be a happy valley in Abyssinia where the royal princes are confined in total seclusion, but with ample supplies for every conceivable want. Rasselas, who has been thus educated, becomes curious as to the outside world, and at last makes his escape with his sister, her attendant, and the ancient sage and poet, Imlac. Under Imlac's guidance they survey life and manners in various stations; they make the acquaintance of philosophers, statesmen, men of the world, and recluses; they discuss the results of their experience pretty much in the style of the *Rambler;* they agree to pronounce the sentence "Vanity of Vanities!" and finally, in a "conclusion where nothing is concluded," they resolve to return to the happy valley. The book is little more than a set of essays upon life, with just story enough to hold it together. It is wanting in those brilliant flashes of epigram, which illustrate Voltaire's pages so as to blind some readers to its real force of sentiment, and yet it leaves a peculiar and powerful impression upon the reader.

The general tone may be collected from a few passages.

Here is a fragment, the conclusion of which is perhaps the most familiar of quotations from Johnson's writings. Imlac in narrating his life describes his attempts to become a poet.

"The business of a poet," said Imlac, "is to examine not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features as recall the original to every mind; and must neglect the minute discriminations which one may have remarked, and another have neglected for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness."

"But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and know the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions, and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondency of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same; he must therefore content himself with the slow progress of his name; contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners

of future generations, as a being superior to time and place.

"His labours are not yet at an end; he must know many languages and many sciences; and that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must by incessant practice familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony."

Imlac now felt the enthusiastic fit and was proceeding to aggrandize his profession, when the prince cried out, "Enough, thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet."

Indeed, Johnson's conception of poetry is not the one which is now fashionable, and which would rather seem to imply that philosophical power and moral sensibility are so far disqualifications to the true poet.

Here, again, is a view of the superfine system of moral philosophy. A meeting of learned men is discussing the ever-recurring problem of happiness, and one of them speaks as follows:—

"The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire; he will receive and reject with equability of temper, and act or suffer as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions or intricate ratiocinations. Let him learn to be wise by easier means: let him observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove; let him consider the life of

animals whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide and are happy.

"Let us, therefore, at length cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim, that deviation from nature is deviation from happiness."

The prince modestly inquires what is the precise meaning of the advice just given.

"When I find young men so humble and so docile," said the philosopher, "I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects, to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things.

"The prince soon found that this was one of the sages, whom he should understand less as he heard him longer."

Here, finally, is a characteristic reflection upon the right mode of meeting sorrow.

"The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity," said Imlac, "is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled; yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But as they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do

as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either, but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation.

"Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye, and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion; commit yourself again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet in your way some other favourite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation."

In one respect *Rasselas* is curiously contrasted with *Candide*. Voltaire's story is aimed at the doctrine of theological optimism, and, whether that doctrine be well or ill understood, has therefore an openly sceptical tendency. Johnson, to whom nothing could be more abhorrent than an alliance with any assailant of orthodoxy, draws no inference from his pessimism. He is content to state the fact of human misery without perplexing himself with the resulting problem as to the final cause of human existence. If the question had been explicitly brought before him, he would, doubtless, have replied that the mystery was insoluble. To answer either in the sceptical or the optimistic sense was equally presumptuous. Johnson's religious beliefs in fact were not such as to suggest that kind of comfort which is to be obtained by explaining away the existence of evil. If he, too, would have said that in some sense all must be for the best in a world ruled by a perfect Creator, the sense must be one which

would allow of the eternal misery of indefinite multitudes of his creatures.

But, in truth, it was characteristic of Johnson to turn away his mind from such topics. He was interested in ethical speculations, but on the practical side, in the application to life, not in the philosophy on which it might be grounded. In that direction he could see nothing but a "milking of the bull"—a fruitless or rather a pernicious waste of intellect. An intense conviction of the supreme importance of a moral guidance in this difficult world, made him abhor any rash inquiries by which the basis of existing authority might be endangered.

This sentiment is involved in many of those prejudices which have been so much, and in some sense justifiably ridiculed. Man has been wretched and foolish since the race began, and will be till it ends; one chorus of lamentation has ever been rising, in countless dialects but with a single meaning; the plausible schemes of philosophers give no solution to the everlasting riddle; the nostrums of politicians touch only the surface of the deeply-rooted evil; it is folly to be querulous, and as silly to fancy that men are growing worse, as that they are much better than they used to be. The evils under which we suffer are not skin-deep, to be eradicated by changing the old physicians for new quacks. What is to be done under such conditions, but to hold fast as vigorously as we can to the rules of life and faith which have served our ancestors, and which, whatever their justifications, are at least the only consolation, because they supply the only guidance through this labyrinth of troubles? Macaulay has ridiculed Johnson for what he takes to be the ludicrous inconsistency of his intense political prejudice, combined with his assertion of the indifference of all forms of

government. "If," says Macaulay, "the difference between two forms of government be not worth half a guinea, it is not easy to see how Whiggism can be viler than Toryism, or the Crown can have too little power." The answer is surely obvious. Whiggism is vile, according to the doctor's phrase, because Whiggism is a "negation of all principle;" it is in his view, not so much the preference of one form to another, as an attack upon the vital condition of all government. He called Burke a "bottomless Whig" in this sense, implying that Whiggism meant anarchy; and in the next generation a good many people were led, rightly or wrongly, to agree with him by the experience of the French revolution.

This dogged conservatism has both its value and its grotesque side. When Johnson came to write political pamphlets in his later years, and to deal with subjects little familiar to his mind, the results were grotesque enough. Loving authority, and holding one authority to be as good as another, he defended with uncompromising zeal the most preposterous and tyrannical measures. The pamphlets against the Wilkite agitators and the American rebels are little more than a huge "rhinoceros" snort of contempt against all who are fools enough or wicked enough to promote war and disturbance in order to change one form of authority for another. Here is a characteristic passage, giving his view of the value of such demonstrators:—

"The progress of a petition is well known. An ejected placeman goes down to his county or his borough, tells his friends of his inability to serve them and his constituents, of the corruption of the government. His friends readily understand that he who can get nothing, will have nothing to give. They agree to proclaim a meeting

Meat and drink are plentifully provided, a crowd is easily brought together, and those who think that they know the reason of the meeting undertake to tell those who know it not. Ale and clamour unite their powers; the crowd, condensed and heated, begins to ferment with the leaven of sedition. All see a thousand evils, though they cannot show them, and grow impatient for a remedy, though they know not what.

"A speech is then made by the Cicero of the day; he says much and suppresses more, and credit is equally given to what he tells and what he conceals. The petition is heard and universally approved. Those who are sober enough to write, add their names, and the rest would sign it if they could.

"Every man goes home and tells his neighbour of the glories of the day; how he was consulted, and what he advised; how he was invited into the great room, where his lordship caressed him by his name; how he was caressed by Sir Francis, Sir Joseph, and Sir George; how he ate turtle and venison, and drank unanimity to the three brothers.

"The poor loiterer, whose shop had confined him or whose wife had locked him up, hears the tale of luxury with envy, and at last inquires what was their petition. Of the petition nothing is remembered by the narrator, but that it spoke much of fears and apprehensions and something very alarming, but that he is sure it is against the government.

"The other is convinced that it must be right, and wishes he had been there, for he loves wine and venison, and resolves as long as he lives to be against the government.

"The petition is then handed from town to town, and from house to house; and wherever it comes, the inha-

bitants flock together that they may see that which must be sent to the king. Names are easily collected. One man signs because he hates the papists; another because he has vowed destruction to the turnpikes; one because it will vex the parson; another because he owes his landlord nothing; one because he is rich; another because he is poor; one to show that he is not afraid; and another to show that he can write."

The only writing in which we see a distinct reflection of Johnson's talk is the *Lives of the Poets*. The excellence of that book is of the same kind as the excellence of his conversation. Johnson wrote it under pressure, and it has suffered from his characteristic indolence. Modern authors would fill as many pages as Johnson has filled lines, with the biographies of some of his heroes. By industriously sweeping together all the rubbish which is in any way connected with the great man, by elaborately discussing the possible significance of infinitesimal bits of evidence, and by disquisition upon general principles or the whole mass of contemporary literature, it is easy to swell volumes to any desired extent. The result is sometimes highly interesting and valuable, as it is sometimes a new contribution to the dust-heaps; but in any case the design is something quite different from Johnson's. He has left much to be supplied and corrected by later scholars. His aim is simply to give a vigorous summary of the main facts of his heroes' lives, a pithy analysis of their character, and a short criticism of their productions The strong sense which is everywhere displayed, the massive style, which is yet easier and less cumbrous than in his earlier work, and the uprightness and independence of the judgments, make the book agreeable even where we are most inclined to dissent from its conclusions.

The criticism is that of a school which has died out under the great revolution of modern taste. The booksellers decided that English poetry began for their purposes with Cowley, and Johnson has, therefore, nothing to say about some of the greatest names in our literature. The loss is little to be regretted, since the biographical part of earlier memoirs must have been scanty, and the criticism inappreciative. Johnson, it may be said, like most of his contemporaries, considered poetry almost exclusively from the didactic and logical point of view. He always inquires what is the moral of a work of art. If he does not precisely ask "what it proves," he pays excessive attention to the logical solidity and coherence of its sentiments. He condemns not only insincerity and affectation of feeling, but all such poetic imagery as does not correspond to the actual prosaic belief of the writer. For the purely musical effects of poetry he has little or no feeling, and allows little deviation from the alternate long and short syllables neatly bound in Pope's couplets.

To many readers this would imply that Johnson omits precisely the poetic element in poetry. I must be here content to say that in my opinion it implies rather a limitation than a fundamental error. Johnson errs in supposing that his logical tests are at all adequate; but it is, I think, a still greater error to assume that poetry has no connexion, because it has not this kind of connexion, with philosophy. His criticism has always a meaning, and in the case of works belonging to his own school a very sound meaning. When he is speaking of other poetry, we can only reply that his remarks may be true, but that they are not to the purpose.

The remarks on the poetry of Dryden, Addison, and Pope are generally excellent, and always give the genuine

expression of an independent judgment. Whoever thinks for himself, and says plainly what he thinks, has some merit as a critic. This, it is true, is about all that can be said for such criticism as that on *Lycidas*, which is a delicious example of the wrong way of applying strong sense to inappropriate topics. Nothing can be truer in a sense, and nothing less relevant.

"In this poem," he says, "there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are easily exhausted, and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines?—

> We drove afield, and both together heard
> What time the gray fly winds her sultry horn,
> Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a-field and had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found.

"Among the flocks and copses and flowers appear the heathen deities: Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge or less exercise invention than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; how one god

asks another god what has become of Lycidas, and neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honour."

This is of course utterly outrageous, and yet much of it is undeniably true. To explain why, in spite of truth, *Lycidas* is a wonderful poem, would be to go pretty deeply into the theory of poetic expression. Most critics prefer simply to shriek, being at any rate safe from the errors of independent judgment.

The general effect of the book, however, is not to be inferred from this or some other passages of antiquated and eccentric criticism. It is the shrewd sense everywhere cropping up which is really delightful. The keen remarks upon life and character, though, perhaps, rather too severe in tone, are worthy of a vigorous mind, stored with much experience of many classes, and braced by constant exercise in the conversational arena. Passages everywhere abound which, though a little more formal in expression, have the forcible touch of his best conversational sallies. Some of the prejudices, which are expressed more pithily in *Boswell*, are defended by a reasoned exposition in the *Lives*. Sentence is passed with the true judicial air; and if he does not convince us of his complete impartiality, he at least bases his decisions upon solid and worthy grounds. It would be too much, for example, to expect that Johnson should sympathize with the grand republicanism of Milton, or pardon a man who defended the execution of the blessed Martyr. He failed, therefore, to satisfy the ardent admirers of the great poet. Yet his judgment is not harsh or ungenerous, but, at worst, the judgment of a man striving to be just, in spite of some inevitable want of sympathy.

The quality of Johnson's incidental remarks may be

inferred from one or two brief extracts. Here is an observation which Johnson must have had many chances of verifying. Speaking of Dryden's money difficulties, he says, "It is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal, and they that trust her promises, make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow."

Here is another shrewd comment upon the compliments paid to Halifax, of whom Pope says in the character of Bufo,—

> Fed with soft dedications all day long,
> Horace and he went hand and hand in song.

"To charge all unmerited praise with the guilt of flattery, or to suppose that the encomiast always knows and feels the falsehoods of his assertions, is surely to discover great ignorance of human nature and of human life. In determinations depending not on rules, but on reference and comparison, judgment is always in some degree subject to affection. Very near to admiration is the wish to admire.

"Every man willingly gives value to the praise which he receives, and considers the sentence passed in his favour as the sentence of discernment. We admire in a friend that understanding that selected us for confidence; we admire more in a patron that bounty which, instead of scattering bounty indiscriminately, directed it to us; and if the patron be an author, those performances which gratitude forbids us to blame, affection will easily dispose us to exalt.

"To these prejudices, hardly culpable, interest adds a power always operating, though not always, because not willingly, perceived. The modesty of praise gradually

wears away; and, perhaps, the pride of patronage may be in time so increased that modest praise will no longer please.

"Many a blandishment was practised upon Halifax, which he would never have known had he no other attractions than those of his poetry, of which a short time has withered the beauties. It would now be esteemed no honour by a contributor to the monthly bundles of verses, to be told that, in strains either familiar or solemn, he sings like Halifax."

I will venture to make a longer quotation from the life of Pope, which gives, I think, a good impression of his manner:—

"Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him.

"But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and certainly what we hide from ourselves, we do not show to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse.

"In the eagerness of conversation, the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered. In

the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down by design to depreciate his own character.

"Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known, and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them. To charge those favourable representations which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would show more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts while they are general are right, and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

"If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition*. To know

whether he disentangles himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison. One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when 'he has just nothing else to do,' yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he 'had always some poetical scheme in his head.' It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestic related that, in the dreadful winter of '40, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper lest he should lose a thought.

"He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped he did despise them. As he happened to live in two reigns when the court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings, and proclaims that 'he never sees courts.' Yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, 'How he could love a prince while he disliked kings.'"

Johnson's best poetry is the versified expression of the tone of sentiment with which we are already familiar. The *Vanity of Human Wishes* is, perhaps, the finest poem written since Pope's time and in Pope's manner, with the exception of Goldsmith's still finer performances.

Johnson, it need hardly be said, has not Goldsmith's exquisite fineness of touch and delicacy of sentiment. He is often ponderous and verbose, and one feels that the mode of expression is not that which is most congenial; and yet the vigour of thought makes itself felt through rather clumsy modes of utterance. Here is one of the best passages, in which he illustrates the vanity of military glory:—

On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes let Swedish Charles decide;
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign:
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain.
"Think nothing gain'd," he cries, "till nought remain;
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky?"
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realms of Frost.
He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay—
Hide, blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day!
The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemn'd a needy supplicant to wait,
While ladies interpose and slaves debate—
But did not Chance at length her error mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress and a dubious hand;

He left the name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral and adorn a tale.

The concluding passage may also fitly conclude this survey of Johnson's writings. The sentiment is less gloomy than is usual, but it gives the answer which he would have given in his calmer moods to the perplexed riddle of life; and, in some form or other, it is, perhaps, the best or the only answer that can be given:—

Where, then, shall Hope and Fear their objects find?
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise?
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies?
Inquirer cease; petitions yet remain
Which Heaven may hear, nor deem religion vain;
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice
Safe in His power whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer.
Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,
Secure whate'er He gives—He gives the best.
Yet when the scene of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions and a will resign'd;
For Love, which scarce collective men can fill;
For Patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
For Faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts Death kind nature's signal of retreat.
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
These goods He grants who grants the power to gain;
With these Celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

INDEX.